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FOSTER ON MAH JONG

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BY

R. F. FOSTER

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ERNEST K. MOY

EDITOR OF THE "CHINA REVIEW"

TO WHOM I AM INDEBTED FOR MANY USEFUL
SUGGESTIONS AND MUCH VALUABLE ADVICE

14'084

PREFACE

THE following pages are an attempt to set before the English speaking world a clear statement of the introduction and development of this fascinating Chinese game, Mah Jong, and the best methods of playing it so as to conform to the laws of logic and probability, which must eventually govern all games that are a combination of luck and skill. Any game whose laws are not in accordance with the logical cohesion and interdependence of its parts, and are not based on the doctrine of probabilities, must eventually be changed to meet those requirements.

With the origin of the game in China, we have little or nothing to do. We are not compelled to play a game exactly as it is played by the nation from which we borrow it, especially when the psychology of that nation with relation to games differs radically from our own. There is an evolution in games, and the fittest parts survive, by the natural process of selection.

For the beginner, the usual chapters descriptive of the game and the paraphernalia with which it is played are given. The more or less popular variations from the standard game are also dealt with; but the advanced player will probably find his chief interest in the historical part, and the discussion of logic and probability.

R. F. FOSTER

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FOSTER ON MAH JONG

INTRODUCTION

The Chinese have given western civilization many things, some of them of the greatest importance in their influence upon our comfort and progress. In clothing, we are indebted to them for silk; in food stuffs, for tea; in the mechanical arts, for the printing press; in commerce, for paper; in navigation, for the mariner's compass; in war, for gunpowder; in displays and celebrations, for fireworks; in playthings, for kites. It now looks as if we were about to add permanently to our stock of domestic amusements by adopting a popular Chinese game, which has at present as many names as there are ways of playing it.

What kind of welcome will the newcomer find, and how long is it likely to stay with us? The first part of the question has already been answered by the almost instantaneous popularity that the game has achieved. I am often asked if I think Mah Jong is going to last.

While it is dangerous to prophesy unless you know, I am willing to predict that Mah Jong has come to stay; simply because it fills a long-felt

want. It is just the game that those who are prejudiced against playing cards have been looking for. It is too good a game to pass away, and in some form or other, with dominoes, or with cards, or both, it will undoubtedly be added permanently to our stock of social amusements.

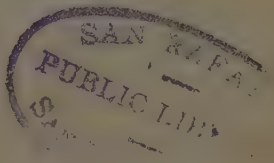
Mah Jong has a great advantage over most of our social games in the matter of adaptability. It is equally attractive to persons of widely different temperaments and mental capacity. The elements are comparatively easy to learn, if presented by a competent teacher, the only difficulty, probably, being in the matter of scoring, although the scoring values are no more complicated than those at bridge, which some players never master. Having once got hold of the fundamental idea of the game, one can at once proceed to play and enjoy it, without the slightest fear of interfering with the pleasure of the others at the table, no matter how skillful they may be.

This absence of any partnership complications is one of the greatest attractions of Mah Jong. One can make any number of mistakes, and not only will no one find any fault, but no one will know anything about it, except perhaps in the last tile played.

Another strong point is the sustained interest. It does not matter how poor a hand one starts with, its possibilities are unlimited. There is always the pleasing anticipation each time one draws a piece from the wall, or watches another

player's discard, with all their potentialities for good luck or bad.

The continual shifting of the character of the hand, which takes on a new aspect with every draw or discard. The excitement of waiting for the final touch that completes the hand. The joy of winning when your adversaries are also waiting for only one tile. The satisfaction of a race well run, and a winning well earned. All these contribute to make Mah Jong the fascinating game it is and that it always will be, with none of the recriminations or regrets peculiar to partnership games. Whatever you do at Mah Jong is your own doing, for better or for worse.



FOR THOSE IN A HURRY

They say that Americans are always in a hurry, and those who have just come into possession of a nice new set of tiles are naturally in a hurry to get to work and play the game. It may therefore be taken for granted, that they are not particularly interested at first in its history, or its laws, but want first to learn how to use the set. For the benefit of such ambitious mortals, I have determined to put the following very brief outline of the rules of play before everything else. Those who know the game, or want to go into details can pass on to later chapters.

FOSTER'S RULES FOR PLAY

(Copyright, 1923, by R. F. Foster)

The Standard set is 144 pieces, including 8 Seasons.

4 players throw 2 dice. The highest throw chooses his seat and is East. Next highest sits on his right and is South. Next highest, opposite E, and is West. The lowest throw is North. The Wind tiles correspond to these positions, and the Seasons to the numbers; E being No. 1, S, 2; W, 3, and N, 4.

Shuffle tiles thoroughly, all face down.

Build 4 walls, 2 tiles high and 18 long each, forming a square. E then throws the 2 dice. Counting his own wall as 1, he goes round and round to the right until he comes to the number thrown. (Ex. 7 would be W's wall.) The player whose wall is thrown takes the 2 dice and throws again; adds the throw to the number thrown for his wall, counts from right to left, and lifts that stack of tiles, placing them on the top of the wall to the right, leaving an opening. These 2 are the loose tiles. (Ex. E throws 10 and S throws 4. Then S lifts the 14th stack.)

Beginning with E, each player in turn to the right draws 4 tiles from the left of the opening

until each has 12; then each takes 1; finally E takes a 14th. All Seasons drawn are immediately shown and laid aside, face up, each player in turn to the right replacing any Seasons by taking tiles from the open end of the wall, to restore the hands to 13.

E begins by discarding any tile he chooses. Any player having 2 of the same suit and denomination can call "pung" and take the discard, but must show the three tiles on the table face up and leave them there, discarding a tile in the place of the one punged. Any players between the discard and the pung lose their turns. If no one pungs the discard, only the player immediately to the right of the discarder can take it for a sequence of 3, all the same suit (Ex. 3 4 5 of Dots). If the discard is not used, the player to the right of the discarder draws a tile from the open end of the wall, and puts it in his hand, without showing it, discarding anything he chooses. If three of a kind have been punged, the 4th cannot be taken from a discard; but if the 4th is drawn, it may be added to the pung, drawing a loose tile before discarding. If all 4 are in hand, they must be shown at once to be counted as 4, and a loose tile taken. Seasons drawn during play must be replaced by a tile from the open end of the wall at once. A tile cannot be taken to make a pair unless it makes Woo. The last 14 tiles cannot be taken. Game is drawn.

As soon as any player gets four "sets" and a pair, on the table, or in the hand, or some of each,

he calls "Woo" or "Mah Jong," and shows at least 14 tiles, making no further discards. The winner is paid by all three of the others, and pays nobody. E wins or loses double. The others then pay or receive the difference between their respective scores to each other, E paying or getting double if he did not Woo. If E wins, he retains his position; otherwise it passes to the right.

Any player having too many tiles must pay every one and can win nothing. With too few tiles, he cannot Woo, but may pay and take differences.

A player who wants only one tile to Woo can take it for that purpose no matter which player discards it, or what other player wants it, or what the Woo hand wants it for; pair, triplet, or sequence. See page 69 for "robbing the kong."

The table of Scoring Values for all hands will be found on page 86.

THE TILES AND THEIR NAMES

The first thing to do is to become thoroughly familiar with the tiles and their denominations. Many sets come packed together in one compartment of the box, and will have to be turned out on the table all together. Others come in two trays, with two layers of tiles in each tray. If you have a five-drawer set, you will find each drawer contains a complete suit of 36 tiles, which you can examine separately from each of the others.

There are three suits, which are known respectively as Bamboos; Characters; and Circles or Dots. In lengthy descriptions of games or plays, it is usual to employ the initials, B, C and D, just as we use H. C. D. and S in card games.

BAMBOOS

CHARACTERS

DOTS

Each suit has its distinctive color. In the Bamboos it is green; in the Characters red; in the [illegible]ts blue. There are 36 tiles belonging to each [illegible]t, being four duplicates of the numbers from 1 [illegible] 9. This is the appearance of the nine tiles in [illegible]e Bamboo suit:

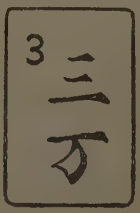
THE BAMBOOS

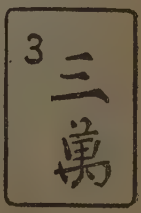
Attention should be called to the 1 Bamboo, which is often mistaken for a Season. This is always a bird of some kind, generally supposed to be a sparrow, or hemp bird, from the Chinese ideograph that stands for the game. It occupies about the same position in the Mah Jong set that the ornamental ace of spades does in a pack of playing cards. In order to facilitate distinguishing odd numbered tiles from even, the odd have some portion of them in red.

We open another drawer and come next to the Character suit.

THE CHARACTERS

The upper figures are the Chinese numerals from 1 to 9, and are always black. The lower figure is bright red. In the more expensive sets





this lower character is more elaborately carved. There are four duplicates of each of these tiles, making 36 in the set. The lower figure is the Chinese ideograph for "myriad" or 10,000, so that the 3 of Characters really means "30,000." Many players abbreviate the name by calling, "Three Crackers," or "Cracks."

We open another drawer and come next to the Circles, or Dots.

THE CIRCLES, OR DOTS

The dominating color of this suit is dark blue, but the odd numbered tiles have some red in them, in order to make them more readily distinguished from the even numbered ones. There are four duplicates of each of these tiles, making 36 in the suit.

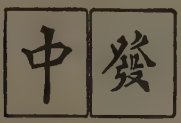
The 1s and 9s of each of these suits are called "Terminals" and in scoring are more valuable than the tiles numbered from 2 to 8, which are called "Simples." The Terminals have the same value as Honors, but have no multiplying or doubling power.

The suits have no rank, one being as good as another in play. In naming the tiles, one simply says: "Four Dots," or "Six Bamboos," or "Bams."

In the fourth drawer of your set you will find three different suits. First the Dragons,

RED WHITE GREEN

There are four duplicates of each of these, making 12 in the suit. They carry no numerals or other marks. In this set the Red is the ideograph for "Center," and the Green for "Prosperity." In some sets the Red is the ideograph for "Dragon," while the Green is the ideograph for "Phœnix."



CENTER PROSPERITY

DRAGON PHŒNIX

In play, it is never necessary to call these tiles Dragons, they are simply named as "Red," "White," or "Green."

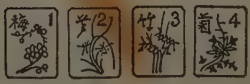
We come next to the Winds, or Direction tiles.

EAST SOUTH WEST NORTH

These are always dark blue, with the points of the compass marked in English letters at the top. There are four duplicates of each of these, making 16 in the suit. In play they are not called Winds, but simply, "East," "West," etc.

In the same drawer you will find eight highly decorated tiles, four of which have a red number or "direction" letter in the upper corner, and a small ideograph of the same color at the top. The other four have a green number or letter.

THE RED ARE THE SEASONS



THE GREEN ARE THE FLOWERS

The numbers correspond to the positions of the players. No. 1 is the same as East; No. 2 is South; No. 3 is West, and No. 4 is North. When West, for instance, has No. 3 Season red, and No. 3 Flower green, he is said to have a pair of his own Seasons. In play they are all called Seasons, and four of the same color are called a "bouquet." These eight tiles have nothing to do with the game as a game, and may be included in the playing set

or left out at pleasure. They are like prize packages, to be laid aside when drawn, and no further notice taken of them until the game is won.

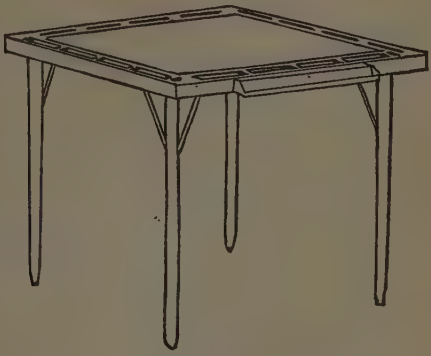
PLAYERS, TABLES AND RACKS

MAH JONG is strictly a game for four players, with no partnerships. It is also a fairly good game for three, but not particularly interesting for two. The first thing to decide is where the players shall sit.

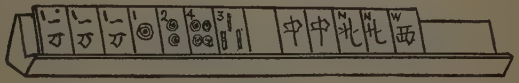
To begin with, they must have a table of some sort. Since almost every one now uses racks for holding the tiles, it is no longer necessary to have a specially high table, as it was when the tiles stood on end. Tables that are higher than the ordinary card table are more comfortable. The illustration shows a very convenient form of table of the folding variety.

This has pockets at the side to hold the counters or chips and a small place for the dice. When an ordinary table is used the best cover for it is a piece of common kitchen-table oilcloth turned face down, so as to play upon the wrong side of it. This allows perfect shuffling without catching and

turning the tiles over, reflects the light well, and is noiseless.



Some tables are provided with racks that can be attached to the sides, and put away under the table when not in use. Racks should slope sufficiently to give one a good view of the tiles, and get the benefit of a head light, and at the same time not slope so much that an adversary can catch sight of any of the pieces. A good rack is the exact length of 18 tiles, so that one does not have to count the stacks in building the walls.



RACKS

The racks come in sets, usually three black and one red, the red rack being used as a marker for

the position of East, and passed round the table from player to player. Those that have receptacles for the counters attached to the rack cannot be used as markers, as the counters would have to go with the rack. In that case, all four racks must be alike, and the Ming box must be used to mark the position of East.

Persons who wear glasses, especially bi-focals, sometimes have trouble with racks attached to the side of the table. Those who habitually wear bi-focals should have a special pair of middle distance glasses for playing Mah Jong, so as to be able to see their own tiles and also those lying across the table among the discards.

Another important thing is the light. Wall lights are usually too far off to be satisfactory, and standing lamps with wires all over the floor are continually tripping people up. The best light is one that reflects the light to the sides of the room, like the duplexalite. Now, if we have four comfortable chairs, the next thing is to decide where the players shall sit.

DICING FOR SEATS

The Chinese dice have one face blank, and usually slightly hollowed. This counts as 1, the others being the usual 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 faces. The dice are unusually small, so as to roll easily within the confines of the walls, and also to preclude any possibility of employing the crap-shooter's skill in casting whatever number he wants. Every precaution has been taken by the Chinese to prevent unfair play in Mah Jong. There are usually four dice in the box, but only two of them are used. The others are to replace losses.

The dice, to be perfect, should be so marked that the opposite faces always add up 7. If we place a die on the table with the 6 uppermost, the order of the numbers round it, reading from left to right, should be 2, 4, 5, 3. Loaded dice always have a small mark or scratch on the edge, between the numbers that they are loaded to throw, such as between the 5 and 6 for high; between the 1 and 2 for low. This mark can be felt more easily than seen.

There are several ways of deciding where the player shall sit, all but one of them being decided by dicing.

1. The simplest is to sit right down wherever you like. If no one objects, well and good. If they object, produce the dice.

2. Another way. Each person throws two dice, and the highest throw, adding the upper faces of the two dice together, takes any seat he chooses. The next higher throw sits on his right, and the next throw on the right again. In case of ties, the first to throw the number wins.

3. Another way. Pick out one of each of the four Direction tiles, or Winds, E. S. W. N., and shuffle them face down. Then the shuffler asks each of the three other candidates for play to draw one, the shuffler taking the one that is left. Upon turning these Direction pieces face up, each knows where he is to sit with relation to the one who drew East, and who chooses his seat.

4. Another way is to shuffle these four Direction tiles and then place them side by side in a row. At one end of the row place any even numbered tile; at the other end any odd numbered tile, both face up.

Any one can throw the two dice, and, starting with himself as No. 1, count round the table from left to right until he comes to the number thrown. Suppose he throws 8. He will count twice round and come to the person on his left. As 8 is an even number that person will take the Direction tile that is face down next to the even numbered

tile that is face up. Each player in turn to his right would draw one of the next tiles. On turning them face up, their seats would be indicated, the one drawing East having the first choice of seat.

THE MING BOX FOR SEATS

5. This is much more complicated than any other method. The small cylindrical box that will be found in the bottom drawer of the set is called the Ming. On opening it, it will be found to contain four flat round discs, each marked with the Chinese ideograph for a point of the compass.

EAST SOUTH WEST NORTH

Every player should learn to read these four characters, which is not difficult if their predominating marks are noted. E is the only one that has a long straight line right through from top to

bottom, and two wide spreading tails. N has two vertical parallel lines that look something like an "N," while S has a high vertical stroke all by itself at the top, W having a horizontal stroke in the same place, the lower part of both being somewhat alike.

The two dice may be thrown by any one. Suppose he throws 7. He counts round to the right, beginning with himself as No. 1, and finds the number falls on the person opposite him, all four players being usually standing up. The four discs are removed from the Ming box, and the empty box is passed to this player, No. 7, who places it in front of him. We shall call this person, No. 7.

The one who threw the dice then takes the four discs, shuffles them face down, and either stacks them one on the other in a pile, or lays them out in a row in front of No. 7, who is called the provisional East. The player who threw the dice now throws them again, and counting round the table from left to right as before, he comes to some person, let us say to 8, on his left. That person takes the top disc, or the one at either end of the row, and each in turn to his right takes the next disc. The one who draws the disc marked E, no matter where he stands, takes the position of the player who has the Ming box in front of him, and who resigns his position as "provisional" East. The others seat themselves with relation to East. [I have pupils who burn joss sticks while all this is going on. It takes time.]

SHUFFLING THE TILES

The players having taken their seats, the set is spread upon the table with all the tiles face down. When only three play, it is usual to remove the four N Winds and the two No. 4 Seasons, as there is no N player. The tiles are thoroughly shuffled by all four players. Some prefer to have only E and W do the shuffling in each game, but there is no rule to that effect, and the better shuffling is done by all four persons at once.

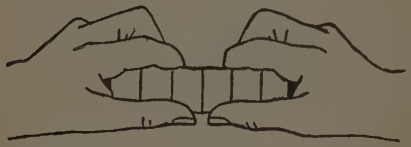
In shuffling, it is a common fault simply to push the tiles about a bit. This only moves one group of tiles to another place. The correct way is with the tips of the fingers, pushing just a few tiles at a time clear through the other tiles to the opposite side of the table, and then a few across and so on. This usually results in thoroughly breaking up any combinations of tiles that may have been brought together in the previous game, such as thirteen or fourteen of one suit.

BUILDING THE WALLS

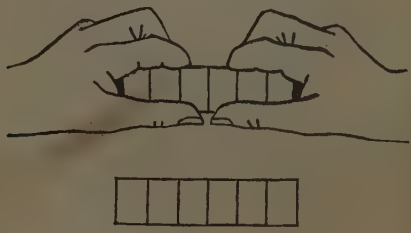
The shuffling finished, each player takes at random, usually three at a time with each hand, enough tiles to build a wall two tiles high and eighteen stacks long. If the Seasons are not used,

there will be only seventeen stacks, each two tiles high, in each of the four walls. When only three play, there will be only three walls, and they will each be twenty-three stacks long with the Seasons, or twenty-one without the Seasons. When two play, each builds two walls of equal length.

Speed in building the walls comes with practice. The usual way is to gather three tiles in a row with each hand simultaneously, and then to join them in a row in front of you, like this:



Gathering six more in the same way, they are placed on the top of the first six. Now the operation is repeated, laying out the next six in a row slightly in front of the twelve already stacked, and placing six more on the top of them.



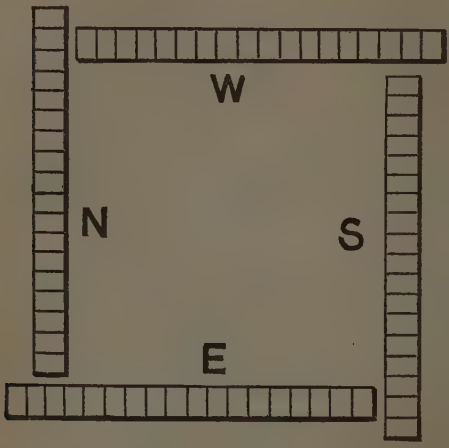
Now split the six stacks farther from you in half, and with three stacks in each hand slap them up snugly to the ends of the first six stacks, like this:

You now have twelve stacks finished. Repeat the first and second operations; split the last six stacks, and slap them on the ends of the twelve, and you will have a complete wall of eighteen stacks of tiles, two high, or 36 tiles, automatically counted.

With racks, this automatic counting and systematic building is unnecessary, as the standard racks and tiles measure the exact length of the wall. If the racks are not exact, or the tiles are small, they will have to be counted.

Each player having a wall built in front of him the next thing is to push all four walls toward the center of the table, forming a hollow square, but in doing so it is advisable for one to push his wall first, usually E, and for the one on the right to push next, and so on round. The walls should not touch so closely that tiles cannot be freely lifted, and, if the table is small, a little more space can be gained in front of each player by

letting the left end of each wall project a trifle, like this:



The walls may be pushed into position with the back of the racks, or, if racks are not used, a wall may always be "swung" by placing the fingers firmly against the bottom tiles only, at each end, and exerting considerable pressure so as to move the whole wall at once. If the wall is perfectly straight in the first place, it is easy enough to swing it in any direction in this way, provided care is taken to put the pressure on the bottom tiles only.

SETTLING FIRST EAST

One might imagine that there had been enough fussing about settling who was East, but that was only a preliminary, just to have a master of ceremonies, or pivotal place. The position of E during the actual playing of the game is important, as he wins or loses double, and can hold that position as long as he can win games by going Mah Jong. As soon as he fails to woo, or the game is drawn, he passes the red rack to his right, and that player then becomes E. If no racks are used, the Ming box is passed.

All four players throw two dice, provisional E usually throwing first, and then to the right in order. The highest throw takes the red rack, or the Ming box, and becomes E for the first game. In case of ties, the first to throw the number wins. The players make no change in their positions, but each must remember that the Direction that belongs to him changes with the changes in the position of the red rack and E. A player who was W in the first game, will be S in the next, if E fails to woo, as the one who was S now becomes E.

BREAKING THE WALL

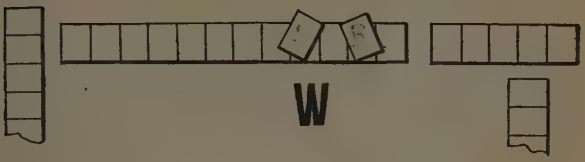
The newly elected E now takes the two dice and makes a cast inside the walls. Whatever number he throws he counts round from left to right, beginning with himself as No. 1, as usual, until he comes to the number of the wall thrown. He may have to go round two or three times.

If this is 5 or 9, it will be his own wall. If it is 2, 6 or 10, it will be the wall on his right. If it is 3, 7 or 11, it will be the wall opposite. If it is 4, 8 or 12, the wall on his left.

Whichever wall it is, he passes the two dice to that player, who picks them up and throws them again, adding the total of his throw to the throw made by E. Suppose that E threw 7, and passed the dice to W, who threw 6. The total of the two throws would be 13.

Starting from the right hand end of his wall, and going toward the left, W counts off until he comes to the 13th stack. He lifts this stack of two tiles, and places them on the top of the wall to the right of the opening thus made. The lower tile of the two lifted is placed at the end of the wall, and the upper one at a little distance from it. It is easy to push the end of the wall a bit to the left, so as to lift the stack out of its place

without disturbing the other tiles, if the wall overlaps, as shown in the last diagram.



The two tiles that are lifted are known as "loose tiles." The one marked "A" was the upper one, and must be used first. The one marked "B" was the lower one. When both are drawn in the course of play, two more from that end must be lifted and placed on the wall in the same way.

If the total of the two throws should exceed 18, the count is carried on to the next wall on the left. For instance, if E threw 10, and S, whose wall would be indicated, then threw 11, he would count on round to the third stack of tiles on E's wall, and E would lift them and place them to the right of the opening.

When three play, they count in the same way, and break the wall in the same way, but they push the three walls together in the form of a triangle.

The wall broken, the dice are passed back to E, who is their custodian as long as he holds his position as E. When neither red rack nor Ming box is used, the dice will serve to mark the position of E for each game.

The end of the wall upon which the loose tiles are placed must always be marked by the presence of one or two of these loose tiles. The wall at the other side of the opening, or the wall which has a free end after the hands are drawn, is known as the playing wall, and the free end of it is known as the "open end of the wall."

No matter which wall is broken, E begins by taking two stacks from the left end of the opening, where there are no loose tiles. These stacks would be No. 14 and 15 in the diagram, as No. 13 was the stack lifted. S, to the right of E, would take the next two stacks, and W the next two, which would be the last one of his own wall and the first one on S's wall.

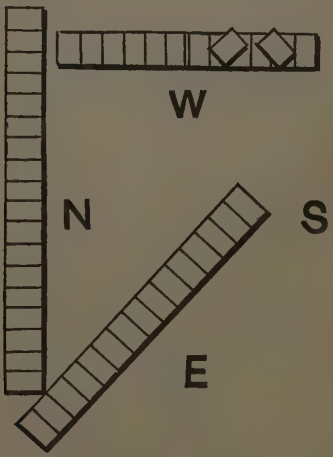
Each player in turn to the right continues to take stacks, two at a time, until each has 6 of them, or 12 tiles. Then each takes one single tile in turn, making 13, and finally E takes a 14th. Some persons think it speeds up the game a little when it comes to E's turn to take the single tile for him to take the first and third from the top of the wall, leaving the bottom tiles intact. This is all right for those who have become thoroughly accustomed to the routine of the game, but is apt to be confusing to beginners, as they do not readily see which tile to draw next. These short cuts are all right for experts.

In drawing tiles from the wall to get the original hands, the beginner should never make any attempt to look at the tiles as they are drawn, or to sort them, until they have the full number in hand. The eyes should be fixed upon the wall, in

order to be sure that the right tiles are drawn by each person, and that no one misses his turn.

After a time players become expert enough to keep their eyes on the wall and at the same time mechanically lay each four tiles out flat as they draw them, and lift them into the rack with one motion of the two hands.

The player from whose wall the last tiles are taken now "swings" what is left of that wall into position, so as to make it easy for any one at the table to reach the end of the wall, from which tiles are about to be drawn in play.



If the "swing" is made with the back of the rack, it should be done before any tiles are placed

in it, or the swing will disclose the tiles to the player on the right. The end of the swung wall that is at the center of the table is known as "the open end of the wall," to distinguish it from the "loose tile end."

SORTING THE HAND

Each player turns his thirteen tiles face up in such a manner that he alone shall see them, and sorts them into sequence and suit. It is usual to put the Dragons and Winds to the left, like this:

After one becomes expert in glancing at a hand, the sorting may be postponed until tiles are drawn and put into their places, but unless one is very expert one is liable to overlook things if the hand is not sorted at the start. As the hand progresses it sorts itself, so that when it is finally turned over for a woo, all the tiles are in their proper order.

The hand being, we shall suppose, sorted, the first thing to do is to impress upon the memory any pairs that one may find; that is, tiles of the same suit and denomination, such as the two N Winds, two 9 Dots, and two 7 Bamboos in the example. One should get into the habit of repeating these pairs over to one's self mentally, so as to be sure that the moment one of them appears

among the discards of any other player, it may be claimed. With such a hand as shown in the illustration, keep repeating to yourself: "North; seven Bams; nine Dots."

THE OBJECT OF THE GAME

THE object of the game is to get together, by discarding and drawing, four of what are called "sets" and a "pair." A set is a combination of three or four tiles of the same suit and denomination, such as three North Winds; three 7s of Bamboo, or three 9s of Dots. A set may also be formed by getting together a sequence of not more or less than three tiles of the same suit in numerical order; such as the 2, 3, 4 of Characters, such as shown in the last illustration. Another 7 of Bamboo, or another 9 of Dots, or another N Wind, would transform one or other of those pairs into a complete "set." Sequences must never exceed three, but a triplet may be extended to four of a kind under certain conditions, to be explained presently. (See chapter on Forming Fours.)

The Seasons and Flowers do not enter into the matter of making sets in any way, but are a thing apart, to be laid aside and admired until the time comes to count them up in the score at the end of the game.

When four sets have been got together they will have taken up at least twelve of the original thirteen tiles. It will then still be necessary to get some tile to match the thirteenth, making a pair. When this is accomplished, we have what

is called a "complete hand," as every tile fits into some combination or other with every other tile, and there is nothing to discard, all fourteen tiles being matched up.

The moment any player gets a complete hand; four sets and a pair, he announces it by calling "Woo," or "Mah Jong." The correct call is woo, as Mah Jong is simply the name of the game. In every complete hand there must be a pair, whether the sets are three or four of a kind. This pair is known as "the eyes," and is very important. The experts do not say anything, but simply turn their whole hand face up, the moment the last tile to complete the hand is drawn or is discarded by another player. When there is only one tile needed to complete the hand, the player is said to be "calling." He may, of course, be calling for more than one tile, as several might complete the hand equally well.

As only one player of the four can win by going Mah Jong, it is evident that each of the others must be partly on the way to completing his hand. Each has gathered some sets, either by drawing or discarding, as will be presently explained, or had them in his hand from the start, like the sequence in Characters in our last illustration. Although he does not win the game, these sets that he has succeeded in getting together may have a counting value in the settlement of the scores, and this value is sometimes very high.

We see therefore that there is really a double

object in the game; to go Mah Jong, or to score heavily. The fortunate combination of both is always most agreeable. A player may concentrate on getting a complete hand regardless of its value; or he may sacrifice the immediate prospect of winning for the chance of getting together valuable scoring combinations, which may eventually pay better than winning by going Mah Jong.

THE DISCARDS AND THEIR USES

The first thing to do in order to start the play is for each player, beginning with E, to take from his rack and lay aside any Seasons or Flowers that he may find in his original hand. These may be placed immediately in front of his rack and touching it, or they may be laid out at his left hand. If E has no Seasons, he announces it, so that others in turn to the right may proceed.

If E has any Seasons, he lays them down at once and replaces them by taking a sufficient number of tiles from the open end of the wall to restore the number of tiles in his rack to 14. The open end, as previously explained, is the free end that has been swung toward the center of the table, as distinguished from the other end, which is marked by the loose tiles.

After E has replaced any Seasons he may have, it is S's turn, and so on to the right, each player in turn drawing a sufficient number of tiles to restore his playing hand to 13. Should any player draw another Season in replacing the first ones, he does not replace that until all the other players have drawn tiles to replace their Seasons. This is to give each player an opportunity to get an original hand of 13 tiles, before any one is allowed to draw tiles to replace those that were not in the original hand.

It is also customary to allow any player who finds four of a kind in his original hand to show the combination at once, before E discards, and to draw a loose tile, as will be explained in the chapter on "Forming Fours." This is in order that he may have his full complement of playing tiles so as to be on an equal footing with the other players in the possibility of taking advantage of discards. The necessity for this will be apparent when we come to discuss sets of four.

All the Seasons having been shown and replaced, we are ready to play the hands. As no hand can woo with less than 14 tiles, which is one more than the original hand, E is the only player who could woo without discarding or drawing, and such an occurrence is so rare that it is called "A Hand from Heaven." If E has not a hand from Heaven to start with, he must discard something, and get down to 13 tiles, which is the number held by each of the other players. This discard, and all that follow it as made by any of the players, can be used in either of two ways.

THE PUNG

If any player at the table, regardless of his position with regard to the discarder, wants that tile to complete a triplet, already having a pair of the same suit or denomination in his hand, he can call "Pung," and lay the two tiles already in his hand on the table, taking the discard and joining it to

them, after which he must discard something, unless that completed his hand for a woo.

It is obviously impossible for two players to want the same tile to complete a triplet, as there are only four duplicates of that tile in the set. But it sometimes happens that one player wants it for a triplet while another wants it to complete his hand for a woo, either by matching up for the "eyes," or for filling out a sequence. No matter for what purpose the player wants it, if it completes his hand he can take it from anybody, whether in turn or not. A woo hand has precedence over everything else.

THE CHEE

No one can take a discard to complete a sequence except the player sitting immediately on the right of the discarder. For example: No one but S can take E's discards to form sequences, with the exception already noted, that the player can woo if he takes it, no matter where he sits.

If the player who is entitled to use the discard for a sequence takes it for that purpose, it is not necessary for him to say anything, because no one else could take it except for a pung. He simply lays down the two tiles of the set with which the discard will connect (chee means to connect) in numerical order, takes the discard and places it with them to show that the sequence is correctly formed. Then he discards. The player to his

right then has the same privilege of taking that discard to form a sequence if he wants it; or any player can claim it for a pung.

Some persons have a habit of calling "chow" when they want a tile for a sequence. Chow is not considered a polite word among the Chinese, it being pidgin English for "eats," and it would be as much of an offense to use pidgin English in the presence of an educated Chinese as it would be to use slang in the presence of ladies in this country.

Although it is not necessary to say anything when taking a discard to form a sequence, it is necessary to call "pung" when taking it for a triplet, unless you are the person sitting immediately on the right of the discarder, because pung means halt; stop the regular order of play, because I want that tile out of my regular turn.

The call of pung is therefore a notice to the players between the discarder and the caller, if any, that they are about to lose their turns, as the one that takes the discard for a pung must discard something, and it is the player immediately on his right that must be allowed to have the first say as to using that discard.

To illustrate: E's discard is the 3 of Dots. No one but S can take it for a sequence. He does not want it and is about to draw when N calls "Pung." N lays down a pair of 3 Dots, takes E's discard and discards a tile himself. It is now E's turn to say what he will do with that discard, if no one

pungs it, both S and W having lost their turns. Suppose now that W punged N's discard, both E and S would lose their turns, so it can be seen that a player, like S in this case, might lose his turn twice or more in succession.

If two players want the same tile, one for a sequence and the other for a pung, the pung has the preference always, because, as we shall see presently, the triplet has a scoring value, while the sequence has not. It is therefore advisable for the player who is about to take a discard for a sequence to be deliberate about it, because if he is too hasty in announcing that he can use it, it may be claimed for a pung, and then he has betrayed at least a part of his hand.

Beginners are very apt to shout "Chow" the moment they see the discard, and so betray the hand, just as some will call "Chow" when it is not their turn. The experts say nothing, and do not even make any sign that they are about to take the discard. No one else can play until there is another discard to play to, so there is no hurry. The expert takes the two tiles that he has in hand, which are a part of the proposed sequence, and then, if no one calls "Pung" he lays them down and discards instantly, before taking the last discard and joining it to the rest of the sequence. The discard makes it too late to call a pung. If a pung is called before the two tiles are laid down, they are just shifted leisurely to another part of the player's rack, as if he was only rearranging

his tiles and had no idea of taking that discard for a sequence.

Some players are habitually very slow in calling pungs, and when one of that class is at the table, more than usual deliberation should be used in taking discards for sequences. This is because they have not learned to keep constantly in mind the pairs that they have in hand that can be turned into pungs. Up to the time that the player on your right discards, there is absolutely nothing else that requires your attention except the possibility of a pung. As you get more at home with the game, you will begin, of course, to notice what suits and tiles certain players reject; but at first make sure that you do not get a reputation for delayed calls of pung, which is the one defect in an otherwise almost perfect game.

The rules of the game allow a player to call a pung and take the discard, even after another player has laid down the three tiles for a sequence, provided he has not also already discarded. That is why the experts discard before they trouble themselves about gathering in the last discard. That is theirs at any time after they have shown that they can legitimately use it.

The only time that a player can take a discard out of his turn to fill a sequence is when the sequence completes his hand for a woo.

A discard made by one player cannot be taken into the hand of another player under any circumstances, (See laws for penalties) because when

that tile is afterward laid down with others the identity of the tile taken from a discard might be disputed. For example: A player having in his hand the 4 5 6 7 of Dots picks up the 7 of Dots from a discard and puts it into his rack. Then he lays down the 4 5 6 keeping the pair of 7s in his hand, and no one might be able to prove that it was the 7 and not the 6 that he picked up. All discards must remain on the table and the tiles that match them placed there also, because any set that is partly made up from a discard is a "grounded set," as distinguished from sets "in hand." It is therefore hardly necessary to add that no one can take a discard with the idea of saving it for possible future use, as one does in playing Rummy.

Grounded sets cannot be changed in any way after the player discards. If the set is not correct, it must so remain, unless it is challenged by another player, who may do so only when he wants the tile himself. As long as the player has not discarded, he may change his mind about taking the discard, and return it to the table, even if he has shown the whole set. If he has inadvertently laid down a wrong combination, such as the 5 6 6 of Characters, instead of the 5 6 7, and has discarded, he cannot correct it even if he has the 7 in his hand.

Only the last tile discarded can be used for any purpose. The moment the following discard is made, that becomes the only tile in play, and all

previous discards are dead, although they still remain face up on the table and open for inspection. It is against the rules, however, for any player to give any information as to which player previously discarded any tile or tiles. (See the laws.)

Some persons like to make the game unnecessarily difficult by turning each discard face down as soon as it is dead. They will tell you that the Chinese always turn their discards down in this way, which is only another of the many ridiculous stories that are put into circulation by ignorant or misinformed persons about the way the Chinese play the game. They find it quite difficult enough without turning down the discards, and so will you after you get into it a little deeper.

It is perhaps just as well to observe that no player is obliged to take any discard, even if he can use it; nor is he obliged to use it for one purpose if he prefers to use it for another. A chance to make up a triplet is sometimes refused in favor of making up a sequence, or the reverse. Whether or not a discard that can be used should be taken is for the player to decide, according to what he is planning to do with his hand, as a whole, as we shall see presently.

DISCARD PENALTIES

As the discards are very important toward the end of the game, and any bad judgment in dis-

carding may enable another player to woo, there are certain penalties which are imposed upon a player whose discard enables another player to woo with what is called a three-double hand, or a hand that would have to be paid the limit, when nine cards of such a hand are already grounded in plain sight as danger signals. (Three doubles will be explained in the chapter on scoring.)

These penalties are based on the fact that Mah Jong is not a partnership game, and that every precaution must be taken to prevent one player from throwing away the money of two of the others by favoring the third. It is not necessarily implied that there is any collusion; but it is insisted that it is a sort of favoritism which cannot be allowed.

There are three hands which are called three-double, or limit hands if the player succeeded in completing them. These are:

1. A hand which is entirely one suit; no Winds or Dragons.

2. A hand that is all Honors, Winds and Dragons; no suit cards.

3. A hand that is all Terminals, Ones and Nines; no Winds or Dragons and no Simples (cards from the 2 to the 8 in suit). If any player who has already grounded three (or four) of the sets that go to make up any one of these hands takes a discard from any player that enables him to woo, and it turns out that he has a three-double hand, the player who made that

discard in the face of the advertised danger must pay all the losses, both for himself and the two others. The Chinese call this "letting off a cannon" (meaning a large firecracker). Americans call it, "Running through a red signal."

Of course if the discard is not used, or if it turns out that the hand, when completely exposed, is not a three-double hand, there is no penalty. Players often take that chance. These are the three danger signals which it is risky to run through.

ALL ONE SUIT ALL HONORS ALL TERMINALS

There are two excuses which will remit the penalty. One is that the player who made the unfortunate discard was "calling" for a three-double hand himself, although he had not grounded any danger signals. If he wants only one tile to woo, and to keep the tile he discarded so unfortunately would have spoilt his chances for a three-double hand, he can demonstrate that

fact by showing his hand, announcing, "No choice."

The other excuse is that he had nothing else in his hand to discard, which sometimes happens. It may even happen that a player has two suits in hand, and there are two danger signals set against him. It is then a guess as to which suit to discard, and if he picks the wrong one, he has the same excuse, "No choice," as it was purely a guess. This excuse cannot be criticized on the ground that by examining the discards more carefully, the player might have seen that one discard was more likely to put a player out than the other.

When a discard penalty is paid the hands are abandoned without any settlement of minor differences between the hands that do not Woo. This is to prevent a player with a big count purposely putting out the three-double hand, hoping to recoup his losses by collecting from the others.

This reference to three-double hands is a little in advance of our subject, but it was thought best to put it in connection with the subject of discards in general.

Taking discards to form sets of four of a kind, or "kongs," will be better understood after the methods of drawing from the wall have been explained.

DRAWING FROM THE WALL

If no one claims E's first discard for any purpose, it is S's turn to draw a tile from the open end of the wall, taking the one at the extreme end. This he places in his hand, without showing it to any one. If he finds this tile completes a set, he says nothing about it unless it makes four of a kind. To show or ground such a set would lose half its value if it were anything but a sequence, and to show a sequence would unnecessarily betray the fact that his hand had advanced just so much toward completion. It would also tell the other players that there were certain tiles that they need not hope to get themselves.

If a tile drawn from the wall is kept in the hand, something must be discarded in its place; otherwise the tile just drawn must be discarded. If this discard of S's is not wanted by any one, it is W's turn to draw from the wall and discard, and so on, round and round, drawing and discarding, punging and cheeing, until some player announces a complete hand by calling "Woo."

As sets formed from discards during the progress of the play must be grounded, they may be neatly arranged one above the other at the left of the player, or they may be laid out in a row from left to right in front of his rack.

The Chinese always lay their grounded sets in a row, and upon completing the hand simply turn over the rest of the tiles that remain in the hand, showing them face up, and usually without taking the trouble to add the last discard to them, if it was a discard that put them out. It is supposed to be enough to show the hand to demonstrate that it was the tile wanted.

The pair necessary to complete the eyes is never shown until the player calls woo, and the only time that a player may take a discard to form a pair is when it completes the hand. This is called "fishing the eyes," if the eyes are the one thing needed. This is in agreement with the general principle that a player can take anything from anywhere if it completes his hand.

The laws cover a number of irregularities with regard to drawing from the wall, but for the beginner one or two points only need be mentioned. If a player touches the tile at the end of the wall as if about to draw it, he must take it. Beginners sometimes draw a tile without waiting for the last player's discard, in which case they cannot take the discard, no matter how much they may want it when they see what it is.

A player may change his mind about taking a discard, and put it back, even after using it, because he has injured no one but himself in showing his hand; but the only case in which he can put back a tile drawn from the wall is when some player makes a delayed call of pung on the last

discard. The drawn tile must then be replaced, and the discard surrendered for the pung, the one who replaced the drawn tile losing his turn.

This naturally allows the player who replaced the tile to know that it is in the hand of the player who afterward draws it. This is the one defect in the game of Mah Jong, but no one can suggest a remedy for it.

Personally, I have suggested and tried several remedies for this defect, but there is none of them exactly satisfactory. One was to limit the time for calling pung to the moment that the player who prematurely drew the tile had removed his fingers from it, after placing it in his rack or on the table among his other tiles. After that time it is obvious that if called upon to replace it, he might put anything at the end of the wall, as the one he actually drew cannot be positively identified. Any player who thought he could locate it might easily be mistaken, and call the wrong tile, which the player would naturally refuse to show. This suggestion did not work well with fast players, as the draw and placing in the rack are matters of a moment with them.

Another suggestion was to replace the tile prematurely drawn among the 14 barred tiles at the dead end of the wall, and to take one of them, placing it at the open end of the wall, so that no one should know what it was. The objection to this was that the player who put the tile among the barred tiles knew absolutely that there was

at least one tile that could never be drawn, and that as delayed pungs were repeated, this knowledge might be multiplied, by him, or by others.

The information might not be of much use in many cases, but in others it would be. Suppose it was a Dragon, and two were in previous discards. The fourth Dragon would be a dead tile, and a sure and safe discard, for the player who knew that. On the other hand, the knowledge that a certain player had drawn and kept a specific tile might be important. Suppose the tile were the 6 Dots. S draws it, W pungs the last discard, and N draws the replaced 6 Dots, discarding the 7 Dots. It is unnecessary to tell an expert that this betrays the character of his hand to the player who knows he has kept the 6 Dots.

THE ELEMENTS OF SETS

In almost every hand there is a certain amount of deadwood, tiles that do not connect with anything else, and that hold out no promise of being useful as parts of sets. But in every hand there are usually one or two of what might be called potential sets, and every player should know and recognize which of these is better than another in case one has to be broken up.

It is not necessary to tell any one that a pair is a potential set for a triplet, or a triplet for a kong. That is elementary. But when we come to potential sequences, that is another matter. Let us take three examples. Lay out the actual tiles from your set and study the position with the explanation.

ONE END INTERIOR OPEN END

The Character sequence can be completed with only one tile, the 3. The Dot sequence with only one tile, the 7. The Bamboo sequence can be completed with either of two tiles, the 3 or the 6.

Let us assume that you have six tiles grounded

and a Dragon in hand. You draw a mate to the Dragon, and of course you keep it. Now you have to discard. There being two chances in favor of filling the Bamboo sequence, of course you keep that, and it may seem indifferent which of the other sets you break up. In some cases it is only a guess; but in others the discard is governed by the laws of probability.

Terminals are usually the best discards, for this reason: If you discard a 2, 6, or 8, it may be one of two tiles that the player on your right is waiting for to complete a sequence. In Characters he may have the 1 3, or the 3 4, so that you give him two opportunities. If you discard the 6 or 8 of Dots, you give him three opportunities. Take the 6 for example. He may have the 4 5; 5 7; or 7 8.

From these considerations we get this rule: The best things to keep are potential sequences that give you the greatest number of opportunities to fill them; and the best discards are those that give the smallest number of such opportunities to your adversaries.

Coming now to tiles that are more widely separated, such as these, there is still a choice of discard, depending on the law of averages, or probability, so as to keep things in your favor.

In the Dots, if you happen to draw the 2 or 8, you will have the nucleus of a one-end sequence; two chances. In the Characters, if you happen to draw the 2, 3, or 5, you will have the nucleus of a one-end, or either of two open-end sequences; three chances. In the Bamboos, if you draw the 3 or 4, 6 or 8, you will have one or other of two open-end sequences, four chances.

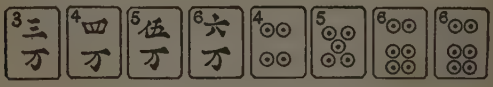
Your best chance, therefore, is to keep the suit in which you have the greatest number of chances to benefit by future drawing from the wall, and to discard from the suit in which you have the fewest chances. That is; keep the Bamboos and discard the 1 or 9 of Dots, which have the additional advantage, already pointed out, that they are Terminals, and less likely to benefit an opponent.

As between two apparently equal chances, it is usually better to cut the longer sequence if there is a choice. For example: With the same two sets grounded and drawing a tile which pairs your Dragon, you have to discard from these:

If you discard one end of the Character sequence, you are "calling" for either of two tiles, the 2 or 5 of Dots, to woo. If you discard either of the Dots, and later draw the 3 or 6 of Char-

acters, the pair is of no use, as you already have your eyes in the Dragons, and are left with a guess as to which Dot to discard and the knowledge that it would be of little use if you guessed right and afterward paired it. If the two odd tiles were a pair, the discard from the sequence would be obvious.

Take annother case. You have two sets grounded, seven tiles in hand, and draw the 6 of Dots, giving you these eight tiles from which to pick a discard:

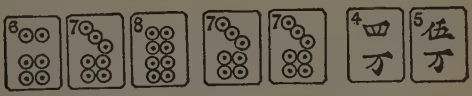


Discard the 6 of Dots, as it does not improve your hand in any way. Before you drew that tile you were calling for the 3 or 6 of Characters to woo. You cannot improve this situation, as either tile will give you your eyes.

Take another variation of much the same situation. You hold in your hand, with two sets grounded, these seven tiles:

A 7 of Dots is discarded. Had you drawn it, as in the last illustration, you could keep it or discard it. In this case you cannot take it unless

you ground a set. Instead of grounding three 7s, which the beginner is apt to do, ground the sequence, and discard the 2 of Characters, leaving yourself with an open-end sequence in that suit, like this:



Another variation of this situation frequently comes up in this way. You have two sets grounded and hold these tiles in hand:

You are apparently waiting for the 7 of Characters to woo; but you draw the 7 of Bamboos. Don't discard it hastily, but add it to the Bamboo sequence and discard the 7 of Characters, this way:

Now, instead of waiting for one tile, of which there are only two available, you are calling for any one of eight tiles, as any 4 or 7 of Bamboos will give you your eyes.

These four-card open-end sequences are very useful things to have, especially in the end game, or if they are the last four tiles left in hand, after grounding or filling three sets, because of the number of tiles for which you are calling. They are even better than two pairs, unless the pairs are Winds or Dragons. With two pairs there are only four tiles that will fill one or other for a triplet, leaving the other for the eyes. With the four-card open-end sequences there are eight tiles that will fill; four 2s and four 6s. These probabilities may be modified, of course, by finding one or more of the tiles wanted already discarded or grounded.

In the end game, a very common mistake by beginners is in reducing their chances to woo by jumping at triplets. Take these four tiles, all the rest grounded or made up in sets.

It does not matter whether the third 1 Dot is discarded by some player, or you draw it, you should refuse to take or keep it. If you take the triplet you will have to guess which of the two Characters to discard, and you will have to match the other one to get your eyes. One chance to guess wrong and then only three chances to woo. If you reject the triplet, you

still have the open-end sequence, with eight chances to fill it to woo.

Of course, if the pair you hold are Dragons, or your own or the Dominating Wind, you might be justified in taking the triplet, because it is a double. If it were both your own and Dominating, of course you would take it, as that means two doubles, and doubles are cumulative. Many players consider the eyes so important in the end game that they will reject even a Dragon.

We shall see, when we come to the chapter on "Calling" that there are a number of combinations that require careful watching; not for what to discard so much as for what not to discard. Many a player repeatedly discards tiles that would complete his hand.

When there is practically no choice about the discard from the hand, especially in the earlier stages of its development, or when you are on the fence, as it were, being undecided just what to go for until you get more discards or draws, one of the best discards is a Wind that is neither your own nor Dominating, if you have any odd tiles of that suit.

Your own Wind is worth keeping, because even a pair has some scoring value. Another player's Wind, if it is not also Dominating, is of no use to him unless he has a pair of them already in his hand and can pung your discard. If he has those two he is going to keep them, and the longer you delay getting rid of your one the more

chances you give him to get a third in his hand, and then he will make a kong out of your discard. An early discard will often find a player with only one of his own Wind.

Dominating Wind is usually a bad discard, because it may give the player to whom it belongs not only a set but two doubles. If you can get even a pair of your own Wind when it is also Dominating, it is worth as much as three of any other Wind, 4 points.

Dragons should be discarded early if they are going to be discarded at all, because toward the end of the hand the chances are greatly increased that some player has gathered a pair of them, and is ready to make a set of your discard. In the last few tiles, when one or more players are evidently waiting for one piece, Dragon discards are dangerous. Games can often be drawn by holding up single Dragons.

One of the most embarrassing situations is to have too many pairs. It was probably to relieve such players that the Heavenly Twins (seven pairs) were admitted to the game as a limit hand. If you are not playing for an all-count hand it is usually better to sacrifice one of the pairs that might later connect up with a sequence, if you have any such. Otherwise you will have to guess from the discards of others what they are apparently playing for, and break up the pair that is least likely to give them an advantage. Take this example:

Discard the 5 or 6 of Dots. Then if you draw a 4 or 7, you will have a sequence, and be calling for 4 Characters or 9 Bamboos. If you get a third 5 of Dots after discarding the 6, you are set in the same way for a woo, with all counts.

The discards of the player on your right are the best guide as to what to let go, when you are in doubt. You cannot protect yourself against pungs, as they are open to any player.

It requires considerable practice and experience at the game to be able to pick a discard that will help a poor hand instead of a big one. There may be two hands, with three sets grounded, one of which has a big count staring you in the face; the other little or nothing. If you have sufficient powers of observation and inference to know what is likely to put the weaker hand out, and save you from having to pay the big hand, let that be your guide when in doubt what to take or keep. Good players will break up their own hands to avoid giving a big hand what they suspect it wants.

FORMING FOURS

While a sequence begins and ends with three tiles, a triplet may, under certain conditions, be extended to four of a kind. There are three ways in which this may be done.

1. You may have three of a kind already in hand, not grounded, and you see the fourth discarded. You can call "Kong," (instead of pung) and take the discard, grounding the four tiles all face up at your left, or in front of your rack.

FOUR OF A KIND

You must then be careful to take a loose tile before you discard, taking the one farther from the end of the wall if there are still two loose tiles in place. If you discard before taking the loose tile, you will have to play with a short hand, as it is too late to draw a loose tile after you discard.

2. You may have three of a kind already grounded, and draw the fourth from the wall. You can add this to the three on the table, and draw a loose tile before discarding, as before.

Many players overlook the fact that they have three grounded, and carelessly discard the fourth.

If you have a triplet grounded, and the fourth is discarded by some other player, you cannot take it, because you must have already taken a discard for the pung, or grounded set, and one is not allowed to pung twice for the same set. It is only when you draw the fourth from the wall that you are allowed to add it to the grounded set, because for all any one knows, you may have had the fourth in your hand all the time. You must make this addition of the fourth tile immediately after drawing from the wall, whether you already had the tile in hand, or just drew it, as you cannot add it after taking a discard for something else. That would be a double play.

3. If the triplet is already in hand and you draw the fourth from the wall, you can lay down the four with the two end tiles turned face down. This shows that although you have grounded them you are entitled to score for them as if they were still in hand.

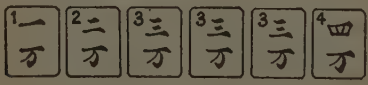
FOUR IN HAND, GROUNDED

The reason four in hand must be shown in this way, if they are afterward to be counted at their full value, is to show that you are entitled to draw

a loose tile, without which extra tile it would be impossible for you to woo. For example: You lay down four sets, of 4, 3, 3, 3 tiles respectively. That exhausts your 13, and you have no tile left to match for your eyes. If you get a loose tile, you will have this extra tile, and no matter how many fours you lay down, you must take a loose tile for each of them, or play with the short hand.

That is why a player who finds four of a kind in his original hand is allowed to show them at once and take a loose tile, because otherwise his hand would be short, and he would be at a disadvantage as compared to the others in the matter of being able to use discards. The very first discard made might be useful if he had ten tiles left to match up, instead of only nine.

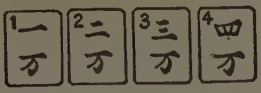
There are two points about kongs that require special attention. A player is not obliged to lay down all four unless he wishes to, even when he takes a discard which is the fourth. For example: Let us suppose he has the following tiles, among other things, in his hand:



THESE ARE IN HAND

If the fourth 3 Characters is discarded and he takes it for a kong, laying down all four 3s, the 1, 2 and 4 become absolutely useless. But if he

takes the discard for a pung, and lays down only three of the 3s, he leaves himself with this:



AN OPEN-END SEQUENCE

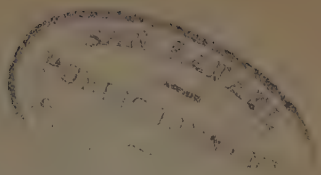
If he draws either the 1 or the 4, he will have five very useful tiles in his hand, a set and a pair.

Having laid down only three for a pung, he may see later that it is not worth while waiting for that sequence to fill out, the game being too far advanced, with no chance for him to woo. In such a case he will take the first opportunity, immediately after drawing from the wall, to lay down the fourth 3, and take a loose tile. If some player calls woo before this is done, it is too late to add the fourth from the hand, and the triplet is scored as grounded.

In the same way a player will frequently refuse to lay down four of a kind, although he has them all in his hand, because he may want one of them to complete a sequence. Suppose that in the foregoing illustration, instead of taking the fourth 3 from a discard, he had drawn it. He might postpone showing the four of a kind until he saw what else he got in that suit. If at any time he changes his mind, or it begins to look doubtful about keeping the kong concealed any longer, he can lay it down at any time after drawing from the wall,

take a loose tile, and secure the full score for the kong in hand, making it, as we shall see in the scoring, four times as valuable as if he were caught with it in hand by some player unexpectedly calling woo.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that there is never any excuse for holding up a kong in Dragons or Winds, as they are of no use in connection with any other tiles. Suit tiles may help out sequences in the same suit; but there are no sequences in the Dragons and Winds. The same rules apply, however, as to adding to a grounded triplet. Three honors on the table can be added to only if the fourth is drawn from the wall. This makes a safe discard for any player who holds the fourth, when he sees three already grounded by another player.



DRAWN GAMES

Loose tiles are drawn for no other purpose than to replace kongs. The reasons for this will be found in the chapter on the Seasons.

It is usual, when it looks as if the end of the last wall would be reached before any one called woo, to separate slightly from the other tiles the last seven stacks, or 14 tiles, which include the loose tiles. Many players prefer to make this separation at the very beginning, as soon as the wall is broken, so that if several loose tiles are taken during the play, the original 14 barred tiles may still be marked off. This little break may be seen in the diagram in connection with breaking the wall in a previous chapter.

If no player announces woo until these 14 barred tiles are reached, the game is drawn. All the hands are abandoned, no one scores anything, and the position of E passes to the right, the tiles being all turned face down and shuffled for a new game.

There is a special bonus in the score for the individual who is lucky enough to complete his hand by drawing the last tile from the wall, or by completing it with a loose tile, just after laying down a kong. If the last tile drawn is a Season,

that ends the game, as there are no tiles left from which to replace it.

In case there have been several kongs shown, there may be three or four less than the original 14 barred tiles left, but the number is never added to. Many persons make the mistake of adding to the barred 14 each time that one of them is taken for a kong, an error which will be explained in its proper place in connection with the Seasons.

There are a number of persons who seem to know or care little or nothing about the true spirit of Mah Jong, and who do not realize its possibilities, who become infatuated with the idea of getting big counting hands. In order to get these they invent or introduce all manner of excuses for prolonging the play, and getting as many opportunities to draw from the wall as possible. Some even go so far as to draw the last tiles.

If they all agree to play any of these mongrel games, which require no skill, but are a matter of pure luck, and more suitable for children than players of mature intelligence, the natural result is a large proportion of drawn games. This is because the objective of each player is so apparent to the others, that about the only way to win is to have some player at the table who is either careless or ignorant enough to throw the game. Some do this purposely, for no other object than to see some one win, and not have all the trouble of building the walls for nothing. No one can play

for a big hand, with the conditions for a woo limited to certain doubles or suits, without betraying what they are playing for.

To such as insist on playing these games of pure luck, the following plan for making something out of their hands when the game is drawn may be of interest.

Count the grounded sets only of each player, and settle up the differences in the usual way between all four. East Wind to pay and collect double, as usual. Another way is to show the entire hand of each player, settle for the differences, except that the one with the lowest score pays nobody, just as if he had wooed.

The first player who announces a complete hand by calling "Woo" wins the game. The complete hand is four sets and a pair. It does not matter whether the sets that go to complete the hand are on the table, or in his hand, or some of each. The final pair will, of course, always be "in hand," because even if it is completed from a discard, the player taking it makes no discard himself but keeps everything, each of his fourteen tiles fitting in with some of the others.

If there are no kongs shown, the complete hand must always have exactly fourteen tiles in it. For every kong that belongs to the hand, there must be an extra tile; fifteen for one kong; sixteen for two kongs, and so on.

A player who wants only one tile to complete his hand is said to be "calling," with a "waiting hand." He may be calling for one particular tile, such as another Dragon to match a single Dragon in his hand for his "eyes," or he may be calling for two tiles, either of which would complete the hand, such as either of two Winds, if he had a pair of each. Whichever he gets will turn one into a triplet, and leave the other pair for the eyes. This is a very common style of waiting hand. He may be calling for any number of tiles

from one to nine, any one of which would put him out. We shall come to some examples later on, which show that in one respect Mah Jong is the most remarkable game in the world, as it is probably the only game which a player may win several times over without knowing it.

It is the privilege of a player with a waiting hand to take any tile that he wants, wherever he can get it, whether for a pair, a sequence, or a triplet, no matter where it is discarded. The only thing he cannot go out on is four of a kind, as he must draw a loose tile. If that puts him out, he gets a substantial bonus for his luck.

A waiting hand permits the player to take the tile away from any other player who wants it for a sequence or a triplet. We have already seen that a player who wants a tile to complete a triplet can take it away from another who wants it for a sequence. The one who wants it for a woo can take it away from either of them.

Of course it cannot be taken out of another player's hand, so that if one player lays down a kong, with the end tiles turned down, a player who wants one of those four tiles to complete a sequence and woo cannot take it. But if a player had already three tiles of a triplet grounded and added the fourth, after drawing it from the wall, any player who wanted that tile to woo could take it, because he still leaves the other player with a complete set of three. This is called "robbing the kong," and entitles the player who woos in

that way to a bonus, as it so rarely happens that robbing a kong will put a player out.

The careful player, if he suspected that the fourth tile might be wanted by another player to woo, would refuse to add it to the triplet on the table, and would also refuse, of course, to discard it, either in the hope that he could later use it himself in a sequence, or that he could draw the game.

It sometimes happens that two players want the same tile to complete the hand. In that case the same order of precedence is observed that prevails earlier in the play. The one who wants a tile for a triplet has preference over the one who wants it for a sequence, and the one who wants it for the eyes has precedence over either. In case they both want it for the same thing, as a sequence, for example, the next in order to the right of the discarder has the preference, which is the usual way of deciding ties in other matters.

It is hardly necessary to say that if two players want the same tile, and one of them draws it from the wall, it is his, no matter what he wants it for. The order of precedence refers to taking discards only.

As soon as a player announces woo, he must show everything on the table face up, in order that the other players may see that there is no mistake. It is his duty also to distinguish between sets which have been grounded and those that were still concealed in his hand at the time he called

woo; because triplets are worth twice as much "in hand" as they are after being grounded.

To begin with, sequences have no value except in helping to fill the hand with the required four sets. Sequences are therefore usually thrown aside among the other discards as soon as shown, unless they are necessary to prove that the hand was all of one suit, or something of that kind.

Triplets in hand are laid down face up, with one of the tiles on the top of the two others, like this:

TRIPLETS IN HAND

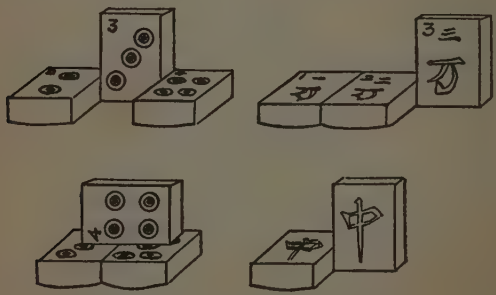
If the last card drawn from the wall completes a triplet and the hand at the same time, it is not only marked as in hand, but is marked for a bonus besides, as in addition to the higher value of triplets that have not been grounded there are two bonuses which should be marked, when the complete hand is shown.

1. If the winning tile is drawn from the wall, it is marked by standing it on end.

2. If the winning tile fills the only place, it is marked in the same way, to show that it is entitled to a bonus.

The only place may be three different things.

It may be the interior of a sequence, such as getting the 3 Dots in between the 2 and 4. It may be the end of a sequence that is not open at the other end, such as the 3 Characters added to the 1 and 2. Or, it may be the match to a single tile, making the eyes, such as a second Red Dragon. These are shown in the accompanying illustration:



FILLING THE ONLY PLACE

Bonuses are cumulative. A player may not only fill the only place, but may draw it from the wall at the same time. In such cases the tile is laid down instead of standing up, as shown.

It is important that the player should mark these things carefully, because Mah Jong is not a partnership game and it is no one's business to correct you if you fail to count your own hand for its full value. If you overcount, they will stop you, but there is a penalty for any player's help-

ing you to count your hand when you would gain by so doing. (See laws.)

Just as soon as a woo is acknowledged to be correct, counted up and paid, that player has nothing whatever to do with what happens afterward among the other players. They may make all the mistakes they like, it cannot affect the player who went out, and if he makes any remarks that would lead to a correction of other scores he may be called upon to pay for it. The winner turns his whole attention to turning all the tiles face down, ready for the next shuffle.

In some places a player is allowed to announce before the first discard is made by E, that he is calling. In doing so he undertakes to take no discards, and to discard everything he draws from the wall himself until he gets the one tile that will complete his hand, or it may be one of two or three tiles, any of which would do. If he succeeds in this before any other player calls woo, he gets a bonus of 100 points, in addition to whatever his hand is worth otherwise.

There is also a bonus for a player who can show a complete hand with the first tile he draws from the wall. E would have to show such a hand with his original 14 tiles. Any other player would have to show it without taking a discard. This is aptly named "A Hand from Heaven."

The player who woos announces the value of his hand, and if it is agreed to as correct, it is paid by each of the others the full amount; double

by E if he is not E himself; double by all if he is E. No matter what any other player has, the winner pays nobody.

That being settled, the others show their hands, laying aside anything of scoring value, discarding the rest of the tiles after showing them face down or turned up, just to prove that they had no more than the legitimate number of tiles. The three then count up their scores and settle among themselves their differences according to the rules for scoring.

There is a great difference of opinion about going Mah Jong. The Chinese make the woo their chief objective, but they seldom play with the Seasons. The advantage of the winning hand is that even if the actual score is small, it takes in four or six times its face value and pays nobody. The players who do not attach so much importance to the woo are always working for big hands. They say if you get one big hand you can afford to pay for a number of little fellows, and if the winner has only an average hand, the others may have little or nothing, and a substantial profit will be gained by the player who was working for a big count.

This is very nice in theory, but the limit puts a crimp in the scheme, and the odds against getting the big hand are such that it usually fritters away its profits in other and unsuccessful attempts.

As a rule, it will pay E to woo as soon as he

can, as he will have to pay double if he allows any one else to do so ahead of him. Some players absolutely refuse to ground a sequence early in the play, on the theory that it occupies a space in the four sets that might better have been filled with something that counts in the score. This is very nice if you have that something, or a fair prospect of getting it; but this class of players is so often left at the post that they are trying to put all kinds of restrictions on the more sensible player who goes for what he can get; such as by insisting he shall have a double, or a clear suit, or any other excuse they can think of to delay the game and run out as many tiles as possible. This alone shows that their game is unsound, and will not win against straight Mah Jong, which is four sets and a pair, no matter what they are.

PLAYING ROUNDS

The first game being over, the players proceed to shuffle the tiles for the next game. If E woos on the first game, he remains E for the next game, and continues to be E until he fails to woo. As soon as E fails to woo, he passes the red rack, or the Ming box, or the dice, or whatever marks his position, to the player on his right, who was S on the last game, and that player now becomes E. Upon him now falls the duty of throwing the dice to see which wall shall be broken, passing the dice to the player indicated, and so on. He also is the first to take tiles from the open end of the wall in drawing the hands for the new game.

As soon as he fails to woo, he passes the red rack or Ming box, which is his badge of office, as it were, to the player on his right, and the same thing goes on again, with a new player in the E position. This passing of E takes place without any change in the actual positions of the players at the table. They all retain their original seats. The change is only relative.

It is just as if there were a large card laid on the table with the points of the compass marked on it in the Chinese order; E, S, W, N.

Suppose that each time E failed to woo this card was given a twist one quarter turn to the

right. Each player would then find a different point of the compass opposite him for the new game. The player who was S would find that he was now E. The one who was W would find he was now S, and so on.

Instead of having a large card on the table and twisting it a quarter turn in this way every time E fails to woo, the Ming box or the red rack makes the quarter turn to the right, and each player at the table knows by the change in the position of E that his position has also changed. If he was N, and now finds himself opposite the red rack, he knows that he is now W.

By the time the red rack or the Ming box has made four of these quarter turns it will be back where it started, and in the meantime at least four games must have been played; perhaps more, if any E player won a game and held up the procession. Suppose Mr. Jones was the original or first E. In order to mark the rounds and to remind himself that a round ends when the red rack or the Ming box gets back to him, he takes from the Ming box the four little round discs previ-

ously mentioned in connection with drawing for seats.

At the start of the first game Mr. Jones turns up the disc that is marked "E", and leaves the three others beside it face down. When the red rack or the Ming box gets round to him again he turns down the E disc, and turns up the S disc. The next time he becomes E, after the end of the second round, he turns down the S disc, and turns up the W disc, and finally on the last round he turns up the N disc.

Each time the red rack or the Ming box comes to Mr. Jones, he starts it off again on another trip round the table, and each time there is a different direction disc lying face up. This disc gives to each round of games its name. The first round is always known as "The East Wind Round." The next trip it is "The South Wind Round," the next is "The West Wind Round," and finally it is "The North Wind Round." When the red rack gets back to Mr. Jones again, that ends the game. If the players wish to continue, all the routine of deciding seats, etc., must be gone through afresh.

DOMINATING WIND

During each trip of the red rack or the Ming box round the table each player is supposed to know what "round" it is; but it is customary for E to announce it when he makes his first discard, simply saying, for example; "No Seasons. South Wind dominates." This means that they are playing the second, or South Wind round.

It also means that South will be the Dominating Wind for that game. This further means that the four Direction tiles or Winds which are marked "S" shall be temporarily raised to the rank of Dragons in the scoring, while the E, W and N Wind tiles are just ordinary tiles. As soon as that round is ended, and it is announced that West Wind dominates, for the third round, it is the tiles marked "W" that are elevated to the rank and value of Dragons, while the tiles marked "S" fall back into their ordinary level with the tiles marked E and N.

In this way we see that during the progress of the four rounds that go to make up a game each of the four Winds in turn becomes the Dominating Wind for a round, and each set of Direction tiles is temporarily promoted to the rank and value of the Dragons.

In the meantime, while the Dominating Wind

changes with each round, there remains a constant value attached to the Wind tiles that correspond to the player's own position in any round, which become, to him alone, as good as Dragons. For example: During the first E Wind round, S holds three W Winds. They are of no more value to him that three 9s of Bamboos. But if W held those three W Winds they would be as good as three Dragons to him, because they correspond to his position. Such tiles are known as the player's Own Wind.

It will readily be seen, therefore, that it is possible for a player to hold a set of Winds that would have a double value. Let us suppose that during the West Wind round W held three W Wind tiles. They would increase to the value of Dragons because they were his Own Wind, and would double this value because they were also the Dominating Wind. This value and the method of computing it will probably be clearer when we come to the details of scoring, which we are now about to consider.

SCORING

THOROUGH familiarity with scoring rules and values is essential for two reasons. In the first place, every one should know what the various combinations are worth, so as to use some judgment in playing for the more valuable when there is a choice. In the second place, one must know how to count any hand, whether complete or not, so as to get the full value out of one's own sets, and to protect one's self against being overcharged by other players in counting up their hands.

All hands are counted, whether they win or not, and the ability to count accurately and with a fair amount of facility can be acquired only by practice. For that purpose several examples are given in their proper place upon which the reader may test his skill.

There are certain fundamental values which may be scored by any player at the table, regardless of whether he is the winner or not. There are others, called bonuses, which belong only to the player who woos.

The fundamental scores are the values attached to the sets, to triplets, pairs, and to certain types of hand. In the sets that are made up of suit tiles, whether Bamboos, Characters, or Dots, there is a distinction between what are called "Simples," the tiles numbered from 2 to 8 inclusive, and the

Terminals, which are the 1s and 9s, a set of Terminals being worth twice as much as a set of Simples.

To begin with, sequences have no scoring value, but they help the player to complete the hand by filling in one of the four sets that are required to woo. The pair that make the eyes are also of no value, unless they are Dragons, the player's own Direction Winds, or the Dominating Wind.

Simples have a counting value only in triplets and fours, and the set must be made up of tiles of the same suit and denomination. A 6 of Dots and two 6s of Bamboos are not a set. To begin with the grounded sets.

SETS OF SIMPLES

An easy way to remember the value of a set of three Simples is that tiles from 2 to 8 are worth TWO. Remember that they start with two and are worth two. Now, if a fourth is added, it multiplies the value of the set by four. This rule holds good for sets of all kinds. Whatever the value of the ordinary set may be, add a fourth multiplies it by four. Triplet is worth 2, add a fourth and multiply by 4, makes the kong worth 8.

The Terminals belong to the Honor class; the

only difference is that Terminals, being suit tiles, have no power to increase the value of other sets, while the Honors have. Terminals are worth twice as much as Simples, so that any triplet is worth 4; but each of the tiles must be exactly alike in suit and denomination.

SETS OF TERMINALS

These follow the same rule as the Simples. Add a fourth, multiplies by four. As Terminals are worth twice as much as Simples, a triplet is worth 4; add a fourth and the kong is worth 16. This is for grounded sets.

The Honors are the four Winds and the three Dragons. To form a set, the tiles must all be exactly alike. If Dragons, they must be all Red or all Green, or all White. To be Winds they must be all N or all E, and so on.

SETS OF HONORS

These follow the same rules as the Terminals, a triplet being worth 4; add a fourth and multiply by 4 and the kong is worth 16. This is for grounded sets.

There are therefore only three things to remember in the basic scores; 2 for Simples, 4 for Terminals and Honors; multiply by 4 for kongs.

All sets concealed in the hand, or kongs laid down as "in hand," (with the end tiles turned down) are worth twice as much as grounded sets. This makes a set of Simples in hand worth 4. Add a fourth and multiply by 4, makes the kong in hand worth 16. A set of Terminals or Honors in hand are worth 8; add a fourth, and the kong is worth 4 times 8, or 32.

Now one can see why it is so necessary to mark the sets that were in hand, as distinguished from those grounded, when settling up after a woo.

The Honors have a further value, under certain conditions. Any set of Dragons, whether a triplet or a kong, doubles the value of everything in the hand after the basic scores have been added up. Suppose a player who does not woo has nothing but these six tiles:

DOUBLING HONORS

He counts them this way: Three Green Dragons, grounded, worth 4. Three Red Dragons in hand, worth 8, total 12. Double for Green 24, double again for Red, 48. As will be seen by this, all doubles are cumulative, and it is possible to have

as many as sixteen cumulative doubles in one hand.

Apart from their doubling value, a pair of Dragons is always worth 2 points, no matter who holds them.

The Winds do not double except under one of two conditions. If a player has a set of three or four of his own Direction he gets one double for it. Suppose S gets a set of three S Winds. The set itself is worth 4, and it doubles everything else in the hand, just as a set of Dragons would do. In the same way if any player holds a set of three or four of the Dominating Wind, he gets a double for that, just as if they were Dragons. These doubles are cumulative. Suppose W is the Dominating Wind and W holds three or four of that Wind. He doubles once because it is his own Direction Wind, and again because it is the Dominating Wind. It will thus be seen that if he had four "in hand," the base score would be 32 for the kong, doubled once, 64; doubled again 128, although there are only four tiles to be reckoned with.

Like the Dragons, a pair of the player's own Wind, or of the Dominating Wind, is worth 2 points. If the player holds both, he scores both, or 4 points, for his own and also Dominating Wind.

There are some additional doubles for certain types of hands, such as all one suit, with Winds and Dragons, and there are certain bonus scores

exclusively for the hand that woos. These are all given in the following table.

MAH JONG SCORE CARD[1]

SCORE FOR ALL HANDS

Sequences are worth nothing.

3 Simples, on the table, are worth	2
3 Simples, in the hand, are worth	4
3 Honors, on the table, are worth	4
3 Honors, in the hand, are worth	8
4 Simples, on the table, are worth	8
4 Simples, in the hand, are worth	16
4 Honors, on the table, are worth	16
4 Honors, in the hand, are worth	32
2 of Your Own Wind or 2 Dragons	2
2 of Dominating Wind	2
2 of Your Own and Dominating Wind	4
If Seasons are used, each is worth	4

DOUBLE FOREGOING ONCE, ALL HANDS

For 3 or 4 of Your Own Wind, or Dragons.
For 3 or 4 of the Dominating Wind.
For Only One Suit, Winds and Dragons.
For All 1s and 9s, Winds and Dragons.
For Two of Your Own Season Number.

DOUBLE THREE TIMES, ALL HANDS

For All One Suit; no Winds or Dragons.
For All Winds and Dragons; no Suit tiles.
For All 1s and 9s; no Winds or Dragons.
For All the Red, or all the Green, Seasons.

WINNING HAND ONLY, GETS

For Woo (Making Mah Jong)	20
For nothing but sequences and a worthless pair	10
For Drawing the tile to make Mah Jong	2
For Filling the Only Place to Win	2
For Drawing and Filling the Only Place	4
For Having no Sequences	One Double
For Winning on a Loose-tile Draw	One Double
For Winning by Robbing the Kong	One Double
For Woo on First Tile Drawn	Three Doubles

ALL DOUBLES ARE CUMULATIVE

[1] © 1923, by R. F. Foster

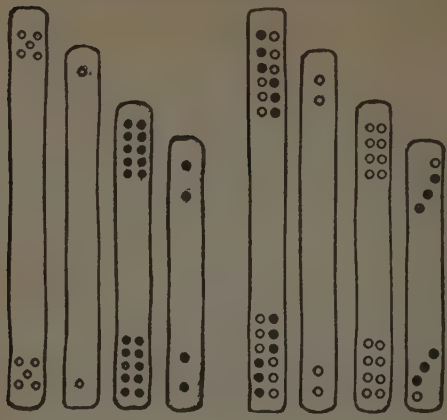
COUNTERS

With the aid of the foregoing score sheet, which can be obtained separately in card form, with abbreviated rules for play on the back, we are ready to settle up as soon as any player woos. This is done by means of counters of various denominations. Those that come with the sets are of varying length of bone, marked with red and black dots; but the most convenient counters are the small poker chips, about seven-eighths of an inch in diameter, and of four colors.

The imported counters found in the bottom drawer of the sets are of two kinds, the difference being in the marking, but they agree in the sticks of greater length being the more valuable, the shortest being the smallest.

There are enough counters in the set to allow each of the four players either 1,000 or 2,000 to start with, according to the value placed upon the longest bones, which are supposed to be worth 500 each, but may be reduced to 50. If the high value is used, they are distributed in this way:

2	of the longest are worth	500 each—	1,000
9	of the next length,	100 each—	900
8	of the next length,	10 each—	80
10	of the shortest length,	2 each—	20
			2,000



MODERN STYLE OLD STYLE

CHINESE COUNTERS

If only 1,000 counters are required for each player, they are distributed in this way:

2 of the longest	at	50 each—	100
8 of the next length	at	100 each—	800
8 of the next length	at	10 each—	80
10 of the shortest	at	2 each—	20
			1,000

These counters may be kept in the receptacles provided for them at the edges of special Mah Jong tables, or in small holders which keep them

upright, so that the various lengths may be readily selected, as shown in the margin. They are very slippery things, and apt to get on the floor if not held together in something or other.

Small poker chips are much more easily handled, do not slip off the table so readily and are quickly counted. In the initial distribution before play begins this is a convenience. They should be of four colors, distributed as follows:

6 Yellow,	worth	100 each—	600
6 Blue,	"	50 each—	300
8 Red,	"	10 each—	80
10 White,	"	2 each—	20
			1,000

If 2,000 or more are required, as many yellow and blues may be added as necessary, which is something that cannot be done with the imported counters. Or the values can be changed in this way:

2 Yellow,	worth	500 each—	1,000
9 Blue,	"	100 each—	900
8 Red,	"	10 each—	80
10 White,	"	2 each—	20
			2,000

Some players do not take any notice of points less than 10 in settling, but throw off all that are under 5 and take all that are 5 or over. A score of 288, they call 290. Some go as far as throwing off all below 50, calling 50 or over an even 100. This is matter for private arrangement, and the values of the counters can be changed to suit the lowest payment agreed on.

Counters of various kinds and designs are on the market, separately from the sets. Some come attached to the racks, but may be used without them. One very convenient form consists of metal discs, of four colors, the values of which are respectively 10, 50, 100, and 500, and there are enough of them to give each player 5,000 to start with. These discs have holes punched in them, so that they slip easily over pegs in a metal rack, making them easily accessible and always separated according to value.

SETTLING THE LIMIT

In a game with such possibilities for big scores as Mah Jong, it is necessary to set a limit to the payments that shall be made on any one hand. The most popular seems to be the conservative limit of 300 when playing without the Seasons in the set, and 500 with them. In either case E wins or loses double, so that if E should win with a limit hand, 300, he would be paid 600 by each of the others. If he lost to a limit hand, he would pay 600.

The limit means that no matter what the hand is actually worth as soon as its value passes the figure agreed upon for the limit it is not necessary to go any further. Call it 300, or 500, as the case may be, and pay up. It may be interesting to go on and see just how big a hand it actually was, and perhaps incidentally get into a dispute as to whether or not you are counting it up correctly, but that is all in the game.

That a limit should be set when playing for a stake of any kind will be evident when we consider that it is possible, although highly improbable, for a player to hold a hand that is 184 points and has 16 doubles, giving him a total of 12,058,624 points. If this hand were held by E, who collects double from each of the three other players, he

would gather in 72,351,744 counters. The hand is shown as a curiosity near the end of this volume, and the way it was obtained. Some players allow three more doubles, on the ground that the hand was completed without a discard and should be considered as the "original hand." This would make it worth the staggering figure of 96,468,992, which would net the lucky holder 578,813,952 points. Imagine having to surrender a hand like that for a paltry limit of 300!

Even when the game is played without a limit, it is necessary to fix upon a limit or pay-up value for certain hands which, if allowed, cannot be counted, as they do not contain any sets, or have some special feature that makes their value greater than the face value of the sets and doubles they may contain.

There are a number of these hands in the Chinese game, only a few of which are generally known to American or English players. One or two of them are simply freaks, such as "The Orphans," and "The Heavenly Twins." The first of these is known to the Chinese as "The Thirteen Odds," one of each Wind, Dragon and Terminal, and pair any one of the lot to win. The other is seven pairs of Honors. As will be seen, neither of these comes within the rule that it takes four sets and a pair to woo, as there is not a set in either hand. If such hands are admitted to the game at all, it must be by agreement, and just what hands out of a possible fifteen varieties

may be shown to woo. Then it will be necessary to say what they shall score. In a limit game, they are all limit hands, and are so called. In a no-limit game, their value must be agreed on before play begins.

SETTLING UP

The special privilege given to E of receiving (or paying) double the amount any other player would do, shows that if E woos he collects six times the face value of his hand and pays nobody. If any other player woos, he collects four times the value of his hand; double from E and once from each of the others, and pays nobody.

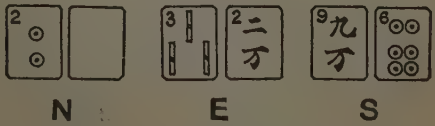
These facts are worthy of notice on account of their application to the scoring in tournaments for charity or large progressive games. The winner puts down a mark to show that he or she w and then 4 or 6 times the actual value of the hai as the case may be. The others put down all the have, without making any deductions. This is the only possible way to score with pencil and pad, and to take the scores from one table to another in a progressive game. The score cards are ruled in two columns; one for marking the woos, the other for the points won. It is inadvisable, however to give prizes for anything but woos, as so many errors are made in scoring in big games. There is therefore no necessity for a limit. The thing is to woo.

In the regular game, as soon as any player woos, and shows the hand, if it is admitted that it is correctly counted, the winner is paid by each

of the others, and pays nobody, no matter what any other player may have.

Each of the others who do not woo then shows whatever sets of value he may have, carefully marking such as are in hand, and turns the rest of the hand face down, after showing that he had the correct number of tiles. Any player with more than the right number at the end must pay every one and get nothing himself, as his hand is foul. Any player with less than the right number cannot woo, but he may settle up with the others for what he has, after he has paid the woo hand in full.

The winner having been paid, each of the others counts and announces the value of his hand. It is a good practice for beginners to take from the discards tiles that represent the value of their hands, and to place them in front of them as a reminder. This will save them the trouble of going all over the count and doubles again, if their attention is distracted by having to count the other hands, to be sure that they are correct. Suppose the three who do not woo mark their hands in this way: (W woos)



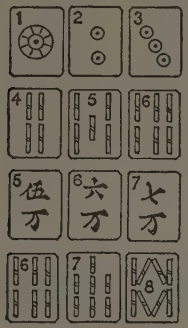
MARKING THE VALUES OF HANDS

N is low score, with 20. He deducts this from E's 32, and finds the difference is 12. As E wins double, he pays E 24. He has 76 less than S and pays S that amount. Now E has to pay S twice the difference between their hands; which is 64 doubled, or 128.

The total value of the hands is arrived at before any deductions are made. Beginners frequently make the mistake of doubling the value of the E hand before deducting the differences. This is an error, as E's position does not entitle him to double his hand, but to double the payments or difference only. If E doubled his hand in the foregoing example, N would have to pay him 44, and S would get only 32.

COUNTING EXERCISES

These four hands are all exposed on the table, none of the sets being in hand. Their value is the same, no matter which player holds them.



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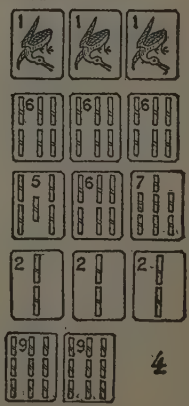

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In the following four hands, the sets that were in hand are so marked, and in all but the last the score varies according to the position of the player that holds the hand. East Wind Dominates in all.

The key to these exercises will be found at the end of this volume; but it should not be consulted until the reader is sure that nothing has been overlooked.

LUCK AND SKILL

Now that we have seen the conditions under which tiles may be taken from the discard and used to make up sets which are laid down or "grounded," and how tiles are drawn from the wall and kept in the hand for future possibilities, we are ready to study the manner in which hands gradually approach completion by gathering the required four sets and a pair.

As already pointed out, a player is not obliged to take any discard, nor to keep anything he draws, therefore he very early discovers that he is called upon to exercise a certain amount of judgment in the matter of what he keeps and what he discards. As he makes more progress he gradually gets into what might be called the spirit of the game, and sees that it is not all luck, nor all skill. From this he advances to the point at which he can both plan and build, and to a certain extent bend circumstances to his will.

There is a certain architecture about games. They belong to a certain style or family, and inherited traits are easily found in the history of the group from which they sprang. This is why persons who have a liking for certain games easily master others of the same kind.

If one will study what might be called the psy-

chology of Mah Jong, whether taken as an individual or as one of the Conquian family of games, he will see that it is governed by two principal interlocking motives, luck and skill. Upon a closer examination it will be found that the luck part is not entirely beyond the control of the player. Certain channels may be skilfully opened for it, making it easier for it to enter, so that no matter which way it comes it will answer some purpose. The skill depends on the powers of observation, judgment, and inference, tempered by the individual's courage or timidity; his optimism or fear of disaster.

The element of luck comes in the original hand first of all, and then in the draw, or the opportunities to take discards. It is remarkable how often one sees the very discards that one wants put down time and time again by a player from whom they cannot be taken. If a player finds in his original hand two pairs, all ready for pungs, and three white Dragons, that is pure luck, and he can take what the god of chance has been good enough to send him. But when it comes to the remaining six tiles, and the question of taking the last discard or drawing from the wall, he brings to bear the exercise of judgment, and the knowledge gained from experience. As the game progresses, and the discards and grounds of other players unfold before him, he adds to his judgment and experience the observation of what is going on around him.

These factors all contribute to influence his decision in following or abandoning certain original plans with regard to what we shall call the flexible part of the hand. The lucky part, the three Dragons and things of that kind, although left to itself, may suggest changes that would not otherwise have been undertaken. A player who finds himself unexpectedly in possession of three or four doubles may cease to strive for Mah Jong as his immediate object, and devote his attention to getting a big count.

Taking these facts into consideration, one easily arrives at this underlying principle. Whatever part of the game is within the control of the judgment, skill, or courage of the player should be rewarded if successfully carried out. The luck is its own reward. It does not matter whether one gives up sequences to try for pungs, or sacrifices Winds to get Dragons, or risks missing Mah Jong to get a big count. He should be rewarded for the success of his plan, whether he goes Mah Jong or not.

To put it in another way, any score in the game which can be played for, whether obtained by good luck or good management, should be credited to the player who succeeds in getting that score, whether he also succeeds in getting a complete hand or not. That, it seems to me, is the true spirit of the game. We all try for pungs, and thankfully accept kongs, in the hope

that we shall get enough of them to go Mah Jong, perhaps with the aid of a sequence or two. If we do not succeed in getting a complete hand, we are paid for what we did get, which we gathered while on our way.

Let us glance at a few of the elements of luck. There are 136 tiles in the playing set, leaving out of consideration the Seasons, which have nothing to do with making up sets or going Mah Jong. You hold 13 tiles at the start and see E's discard; or you are E and get a 14th tile. This leaves 122 unknown tiles. The proportion of these to the number of tiles that you want gives us the probability of your getting it.

To begin with a very common holding, an open-end sequence. That is, two tiles of the same suit in numerical order, such as the 4 and 5 of Dots. Any one of 8 tiles will fill this sequence, as there are four 3s and four 6s of Dots in the set. That is one fifteenth of the 122; so it is about 14 to 1 against your getting it on a draw from the wall. But the next time around you will have twice as many chances, as E has to draw and discard, and he may discard one of the 8 tiles you want. This gives you two chances on one play, and makes it one half the odds, or only 7 to 1 against your filling out your open-end sequence. The more opportunities you have to draw or take a discard the more chances there are that you will get what you want, and if you had seven such

opportunities with the odds only 7 to 1 against you each time, you ought to get the tile you are waiting for.

If it is a pung you want, there are only 2 tiles that will help you out, and the chances are therefore 2 in 122, or 60 to 1 against your drawing it. But as you can take a pung from any one of the three players at the table, you increase this chance four times, and reduce the odds to 15 to 1 against your getting it by either pung or draw once around. The more opportunities you get the more likely you are to get it. If you had 15 draws from the wall you ought to fill.

Some persons will tell you that they fill a pung much oftener than once in fifteen tries, but they forget that this is matter of averages, not single instances. Ask them how often they have held four, five, or even six pairs, and never matched one of them before some one went Mah Jong.

These odds are reduced by the number of tiles discarded or grounded that do not show the tiles you want, because of the number of known tiles that must be deducted from the original unknown 122. On the other hand, the odds increase rapidly if any of the tiles you want are grounded by other players, or discarded before you can use them. Suppose you have a pair, and another player grounds a third as part of a sequence, having had it in his hand. Even if there are now only 100 unknown tiles, your chance to draw what you want is a 100 to 1 shot. But as you

still can take it from any one, this reduces the odds to 25 to 1. If you had 25 chances by drawing 25 times, you ought to get it; but that never happens. The wall is not long enough.

When there are three tiles that would fit, as in waiting to fill the eyes, if none are discarded or grounded, and there are only about 75 unknown tiles left, you have a 25 to 1 chance to draw it yourself; but as any of the others may discard it, this reduces the odds to about 6 to 1. Of course, if one or more of these tiles have been discarded or grounded, your chances are pretty slim; but if not, and there are still probably six more chances to draw, you ought to get it.

In playing to get doubles, we have the same odds against the third Dragon as against any other pung. If the double you are playing for is a cleared suit; that is, only one suit in your hand besides Winds and Dragons, one's chances are not affected so much by the number of the suit in the hand to start with, as by the number of tiles in other suits that must be got rid of. Five Bamboos and four Honors, with four tiles of other suits, are a great deal better than seven Bamboos and no Honors, as there will then be six tiles in other suits to be got rid of.

Experience would seem to indicate that in the straight game (any four sets and a pair being a complete hand for Mah Jong) there will be an average of 35 or 40 tiles left in the wall, besides the 14 barred tiles, when woo is called. This will,

of course, vary with the caliber of the players and their ideas of the game. If they are all waiting for big hands, all the tiles will be drawn very often and many games will be drawn.

In the ordinary straight game this average will give you about eleven chances to draw and discard before any one goes Mah Jong. In playing for a clear suit, in spite of the fact that there are 36 tiles in the suit you want, it is not easy to get enough of them unless you have some pungs and open-end sequences to start with, as otherwise you will have to draw all you want from the wall, and even if you get the suit cleared, there may be nothing to double. Players will also divine your object, and will be shy of giving you the suit you are evidently playing for.

As a player looks over the possibilities of the various original hands that fall to his lot, he must be struck by the variety of choice that they offer. In making up his mind what to "go for," he must be guided by the material before him. They say you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, neither can you make a limit hand out of 13 tiles without a pair or a prospect of a double in them.

So clearly is this recognized by the Chinese that they allow a player to call for a new deal if he has in his original hand anything as hopeless as nine different Winds, Dragons, and Terminals, without a pair of any kind. Gaze on such a hand as this and weep:

A HOPELESS HAND

If a player is going to try for an all-count hand, he must have some of the elements of that class of hand to start with, such as two or three pairs, or a triplet or two. If he is going to try for a no-count hand, all sequences, he is certainly not going to begin with a hand containing three Dragons and three of his own Wind.

If a player is going to try for doubles, especially when he has two or three Seasons to double the value of, he can do either of two things. Save all the Dragons and Dominating Winds that he can pick up, hoping to complete a set with them, even if he has to discard the makings of some less valuable sequences that might lead to an early woo. Or, he can play to get a double by getting rid of all but one suit in his hand, with Winds and Dragons. It is hardly necessary to say that this is a case of love's labor lost unless there is something to double, after the hand is cleared, yet one may see persons playing for cleared suits without any regard to the ultimate value of such a thing.

At the start there is very little to guide the player but his own hand. Each discard, every set grounded by others, tells him something. Each tile he draws in the early stages of the

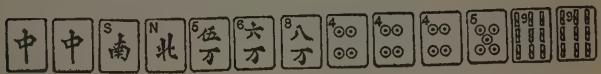
game may affect his plan. It has been well said that for the first five or six draws from the wall the game is all luck. After that it is all skill.

PLANNING THE PLAY

With the elementary knowledge of how sets are formed, and the chances for getting various sets filled, let us take an ordinary type of hand and see what can be done with it. For the purpose of illustration we shall take a hand that is not lopsided; one that might develop in any one of three different ways according to the personal equation of the player handling it.

This hand is held by S, and E's first discard is the three of Dots. East is the Dominating Wind, as it is the first game.

SOUTH'S HAND



EAST DISCARDS

In looking over this hand, it is clear that the two Dragons belong to the element of luck; as they cannot connect with anything but themselves they need no attention. There is also some luck in the three 4s, and the pair of 9s, and there are open-end sequences in both Dots

and Characters. Now let us look at the way skill works in the material furnished by luck.

If the skill is to have full play in every department which is under the control of the player's judgment, and which could in any way affect the result, even to throwing away the good things that luck has sent him, a player may do what he likes with this hand. If he can get together four sets and a pair he wins. If he does not, he will get paid for what he has got when it comes to a showdown.

Consequently, anything the player deliberately takes from the discards, or keeps in his hand after drawing it, comes under the head of skill, as distinct from luck. This is one of the fundamental principles of the game, and must never be lost sight of.

Looked at in a casual way, it might be said that every tile taken into the hand that fits something else belongs to the element of luck; the third to a pair or a sequence; the fourth to a triplet; the tile that fills the eyes. But when the luck is guided into certain channels in preference to others, so that if a certain tile turns up it will fit a space specially intended for it, instead of another space for which it was not wanted but would have done equally well, the luck is transformed into skill.

The management of the hand just shown in the illustration presents several alternatives to S. What he will do with it must depend on his idea

of the game, his knowledge of probabilities and his individual skill as a player. Now let us see how three persons of different ways of thinking might manage this hand, and all getting the same opportunities to take or leave the same tiles in each case, might end up with three hands of entirely different character.

To begin with, let us take the player that "dogs" every hand. That is to say, he runs after everything in sight, just as a dog will run after anything you throw, whether it is good to eat or not. He takes E's discard, and grounds the 3 4 5 of Dots, discarding N Wind, which is neither his nor Dominating. His hand is now like this:

To an observant player this discard of the N Wind would at once betray the fact that S was dogging his hand, because there are three types of hand to play for.

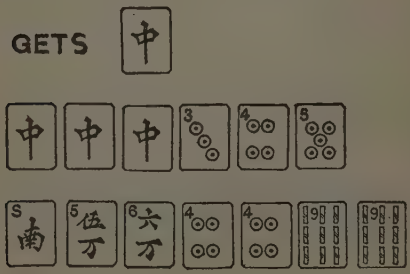
1. Take anything, to go Mah Jong.

2. Play for all counts, or big counts, taking no sequences.

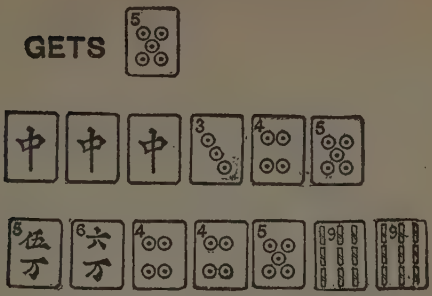
3. Play for doubles, by clearing a suit.

No. 2 type is eliminated by laying down a sequence. No. 3 is eliminated by the discard of a Wind, because, as we have seen, a player who has the best chance to clear a suit is one who has a number of Winds and Dragons, which he keeps, discarding suits. It is noting facts like this that show the expert which hand to be afraid of, and which hand to help out if he is afraid that a big hand might have to be settled with if it went Mah Jong.

To go on with our play, presently a Red Dragon is discarded, and S says "pung."

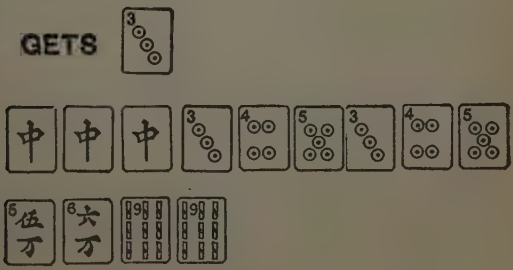


He lays down the three Dragons and discards the 8 of Characters, leaving himself with an open-end sequence in that suit. Presently he draws from the wall, and gets a 5 of Dots.



This he puts in his hand and keeps, as it gives him an open-end sequence in Dots, and he discards his own Wind, S, as that gives no promise of being worth anything. In the meantime, E has grounded the 7 8 9 of Bamboos, which makes a third 9 of that suit look doubtful, but the pair is useful for the eyes.

Presently E grounds another set of 7 8 9 Bamboos, which seals the fate of S's pair of 9s, but E discards another 3 of Dots.



This S takes and grounds another Dot sequence, discarding the 4 of Dots, which he has no further use for. Now he is set for the 4 or 7 of Characters to woo.

Now let us see what happens to the player who refuses to take a sequence at the start, especially as he is not E. Going back to S's hand:

SOUTH'S HAND

EAST DISCARDS

He refuses to take E's discard, as he has two pairs and a triplet in his hand to start with, which is a very good foundation for an all-count hand, so he draws from the wall. As in the first play, presently a Red Dragon is discarded.

GETS

This he takes, and discards N Wind, as there is no hurry about the Character. He might get the connecting 7, which would be very nice. As before, E has grounded the 7 8 9 of Bamboos.

S later draws the 5 of Dots from the wall, as in the first play given, and he also keeps it.

Now he discards the 8 of Characters, leaving his hand in very promising shape for all counts, or for a hand above the average, if he fails to woo. E grounds another sequence of 7 8 9 in Bamboos, as before, and discards the 3 of Dots. This S refuses to take, as he has made up his mind to stick to his guns and try for the all count. Had he taken it at this stage he would not have advanced his prospects of going Mah Jong a particle.

The next discard that interests him is a 5 of Dots.

GETS

This he takes, and grounds the triplet. By this time he has settled on two things. He must keep the two 9s of Bamboo for his eyes, as both the other tiles of that suit and denomination have been grounded by E, and he must get rid of the Characters, or part with his own Wind. He discards the 6 of Characters. A little later he is fortunate enough to pick up another S Wind.

GETS

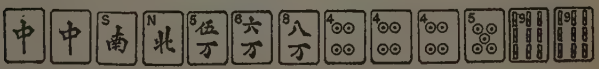
This he keeps, of course, and discards his 5 of Characters. Now he is set for a third S Wind,

as another 9 of Bamboos is impossible. The odds against his getting it are rather heavy, but he has 24 in his hand anyway, and if he woos he will have a hand worth 144 at least, or 208 if he draws the winning S Wind. Compare this with the 48 which is all the dogging hand would have been worth if it went Mah Jong. As S wins four times the face value of his hand, the dogging hand would collect 192 points; the all-count hand, 832.

But if we examine the odds in favor of either, we find that the smaller hand has 8 chances to woo, as against the all-count hand's 2. That is about 4 to 1, or the proportionate value of their winnings if they woo; about 800 to 200.

Now let us look at another player's idea of what could be done with S's original 13 tiles, and see how he carries out his plan, getting precisely the same chances from the draw and the discard.

SOUTH'S HAND

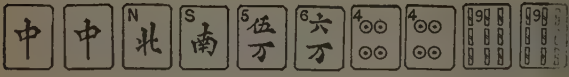


EAST DISCARDS

S is not going to dog this hand, although it may look like it, but he is going to take that 3 of Dots and ground the sequence. He is one of those who

have the clear suit bug and starts to play for the double that it carries with it, regardless of the fact that there is not much yet in the hand to double.

GETS

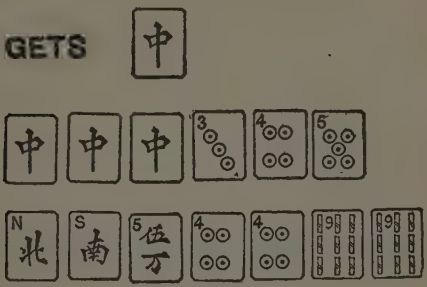


After grounding the 3 4 5 sequence in Dots he at once discards the 8 of Characters. Notice the difference between this discard and the first discard made by the dogging hand, which was a Wind. In this case S does not want any sequence in Characters, and might even be tempted to refuse a third 9 of Bamboos. Some of these clear-suit players carry their game to great lengths.

Presently he gets another Red Dragon, just as the others did, and grounds that set.

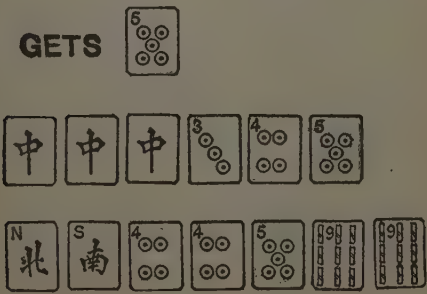
He hastens to get rid of another Character. To shift his discard to a Bamboo might attract attention from the other players. The experts at this game notice everything, and never forget discards. The beginner, playing for a clear suit, usually gets rid of the shorter suit first; but the

moment a player discards a pair, he is a marked man. The combination of grounding a sequence on the first tile discarded and then discarding a pair of Terminals in Bamboos, would make a



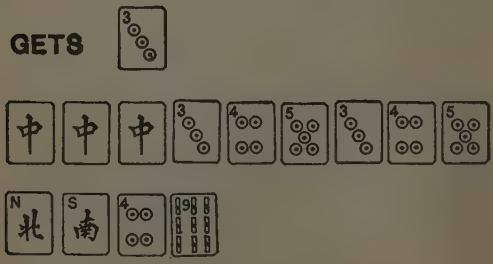
player of any discernment smile. So far as S has gone, there is no evidence that he is playing for a clear suit.

He later draws the 5 of Dots and places it in his hand, as the others did. E in the meantime has grounded that 7 8 9 of Bamboos.



S now discards the third Character. A watchful adversary at once marks the fact that two of these discards formed an open-end sequence, 5 6. Why discard them, when the player is taking in sequences in another suit? The surmise that certain things might be so is now a certainty. There may be players against whom one can get away with these things without their being noticed; or, if noticed without the proper inference being drawn from them, but they must be young at the game.

As in each of the other cases, E grounds another sequence of 7 8 9 Bamboos, and discards the 3 of Dots. This is the tile the dogging hand took, and the all-count hand refused. So far as the grounded sets in the dogging hand and this one go, they are exactly alike; but the discards have marked the two hands as being wide apart in their objective.



S is now obliged to break up his pair of 9

Bamboos. If he kept them for his eyes, and discarded one of the Winds, he would have a chance to go Mah Jong, as we see that S, in the all-count play, got another S Wind after two or three more draws. This player, however, cares nothing about the woo, until he gets his hand cleared. He will get another 5 of Dots presently, as we have seen, and will then be set for the 3 or 6, and still have no eyes in sight. This hand, it will be seen, is the hardest of all to complete.

Suppose he fails to woo, but is left as he stands now, with his suit cleared. All he has to score is 4 points for his Dragons, and two doubles, a total of 16. The dogging hand had 8, and about sixteen times as many chances to woo. The all-count hand had 24, and at least eight times as many chances to woo.

If there were any possible way to play this game in duplicate as they do whist and auction, there would be some remarkable differences in the scores made on the same tiles. It could be done with the cards with which the game is played under the name of Man Chu, but some outsider would have to duplicate the arrangement of the pack, as it could never be put back into a tray in its original order, as the cards are in whist or bridge tournaments.

"CALLING" EXERCISES

MAH JONG differs from every other game in the world that I know of in one respect, and that is that you can win the game without knowing it, and because you did not know it finally lose it. Not once only, but perhaps several times you may have completed your hand for a woo, fail to see it, and throw the tile into the discards. I have seen a player, sitting E, complete a hand with four doubles in it, fail to see it, and have to pay a limit hand to another player who knew when he was out, and called it.

This is because there are so many combinations of cards that may be all grouped in one suit, in which it is easy to overlook a tile or tiles that would complete the hand. It is a very easy matter to sit and wait for a Dragon to match the last tile in your hand. In such cases you are said to be "calling" for one tile. It is also simple enough to watch for the match to either one of two pairs, or either end of a four-card sequence. That is "calling" for two tiles. But there are any number of hands in which a player may be "calling" for three, four, or five tiles, and not know it.

Let us take a very simple example. You have two sets grounded, or already complete in your

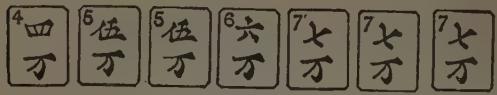
hand, it does not matter which, and hold these seven tiles, all in one suit.

These seven tiles are all in sequence, and the beginner naturally keeps them in that order. As he counts them from left to right he sees that he has a set of 2 3 4, and another of 5 6 7. All he wants is to match the 8 and he is ready to call woo. In the meantime he may draw, or see discarded, both the 2 and the 5, and pass them by, although either of those tiles would complete his hand just as well as the 8.

This will be evident if we read the sequences from right to left, instead of from left to right, making them 8 7 6, 5 4 3, and getting another 2 to fill the eyes. If we split the sequences we get another result, taking 2 3 4 for one, and 6 7 8 for the other, it will be evident that another 5 would fill the eyes.

The ability to see how many tiles you are "calling for" without having to delay the game and betray your hand while you shift your tiles about into all manner of combinations in your rack, being very important, the reader is advised to go over the following exercises carefully, in order to assure himself that any one of three different tiles would complete the hand shown. The exercises assume in every case that you have two

sets grounded or complete, and only these seven tiles to take care of.



CALLING

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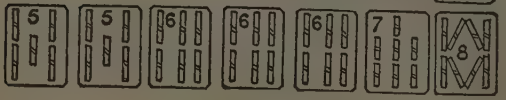

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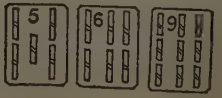

CALLING

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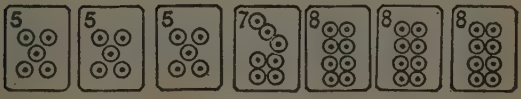

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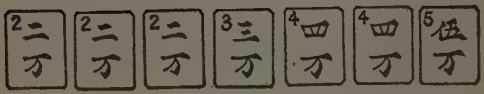
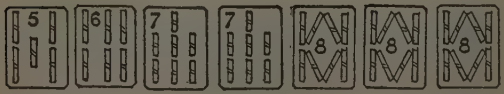


CALLING

Having acquired a certain amount of facility in reading combinations that are calling for three tiles, it may be well to try a few of those that are calling for four.



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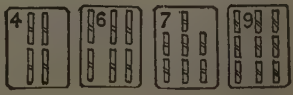

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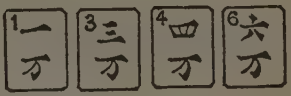

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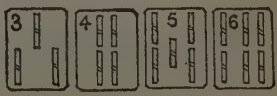
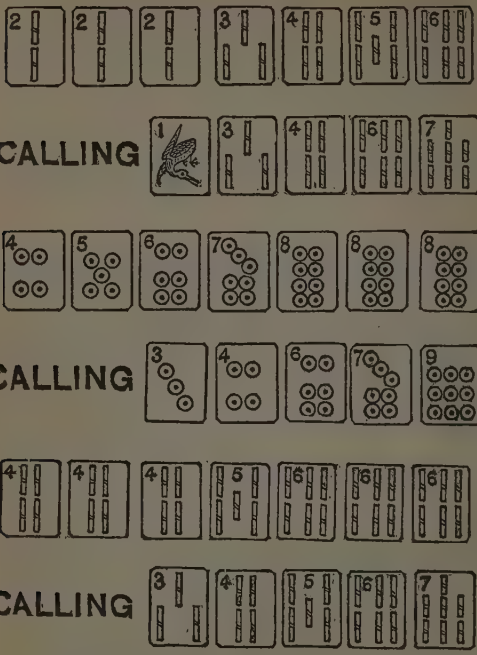
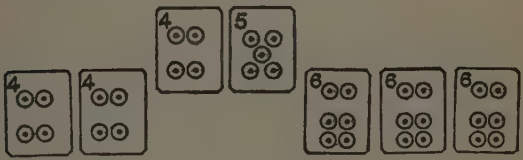


Here are a few more which are examples of calling for five tiles, any one or more of which might easily be overlooked if the principle of finding them was not known.



I believe I was the first teacher, and certainly am the first writer, to point out that there was a very simple rule for finding the number of tiles that would complete the hand without having to arrange them in several different ways. Let us take the last example as a model, simply changing the suit to Dots for the sake of greater clearness.

You are already familiar with the fact that an open-end sequence of two tiles can be completed by either of two other tiles. Now if we apply this to our combinations of seven tiles, we can pick out the places at which open-end sequences of two tiles occur and separate them in our minds, without actually disturbing them in the rack, something in this fashion.



The first we come to is the 4 and 5. Either a 3 or a 6 would complete this sequence and leave us with the two 4s for the eyes, and the three 6s for a set. That is calling for two tiles.

Putting those back and passing on, we come to another open-end sequence, and mentally separate that from the rest, the 5 and 6.

Either a 4 or a 7 would complete this sequence, leaving us the two 6s for the eyes, and the three 4s for a set. That is two more tiles you are calling for, or four so far. Finally we can leave the

triplets as they are and match the 5 for the eyes. In this way, without any complicated shifting of the positions of the tiles in the rack you can see that you are calling five tiles to woo.

When the sequences are interiors, or one-end, only one tile can be called for each, so that the calls are limited to three, as in the second example. One of a triplet can often be shifted to make up a sequence with one of the tiles that are called, or one that is already in the hand. Examples of all these will be found in the hands given, and familiarity with the way in which they follow certain types will enable the player to recognize the number of tiles he is calling for without undue delay.

HOW TO CHOOSE A SET

The first thing necessary in playing any game is to be provided with the necessary paraphernalia. In Mah Jong this consists of what is called a "set," which comprises 144 playing pieces, or tiles, and usually four extra white pieces, which are supposed to be available to replace tiles lost or injured. Where to go for such repairs, short of sending the tile back to China, the importers of the sets do not tell us, consequently these four extra tiles are perfectly useless in this country, and simply take up room in the box. The theory is that they match the other tiles in size, thickness of bone, and color. The best one can do with them is to draw the design wanted one's self, if a tile is lost.

Sets are invariably sold in some sort of box or carrier. The cheaper sets are in flat boxes, with a sliding lid, having one large compartment for the tiles, in which they are packed four deep, and another compartment for the counters, dice, and Ming box, which contains the four "Direction pieces," little round discs with the cardinal points of the compass marked upon them in Chinese characters.

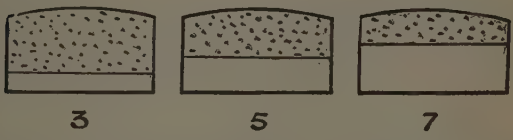
A better class of box is flat, opening with a hinged lid. This box has two trays for the tiles, which are packed two deep in each. All the best

boxes have handles on the top, with a sliding or folding front, behind which are four drawers, each holding one complete suit of 36 tiles. This allows each of the four players to fill a drawer separately when play is over. Below the four drawers is either a single drawer to contain the counters, dice, and Ming box, or there are four small drawers, side by side, which can be used by the players to hold the individual supply of counters.

Upon examining the sets, we come first to the tiles themselves, for no matter how elaborate the box may be, it is not always an index of the quality of the goods within it. Tiles vary in size and in the thickness of the bone, this thickness and the depth of the mortise that holds bamboo and bone together being the first test. After this, look for clean, white faces, well polished, and the absence of any defects in the way of irregularities in the patterns, difference in the size of the figures, or smudges in the colors. Then turn the whole set upside down, and see to it that none of the backs are cracked, or marked, and that all are of an even color.

Sets increase rapidly in value according to the thickness of the bone as compared to the thickness of the bamboo, because the custom house imposes duty on the basis of millimeters in thickness, there being no possibility of appraising the work of the artist who engraves and decorates the tiles. The best workmanship is never put on

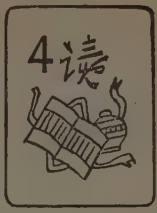
tiles less than 5 millimeters in thickness. The cheaper tiles have only 2 or 3 millimeters of bone; while the best run about 7. Beyond that, 8 millimeters, to which must be added the thickness of the mortise, makes the bamboo backs liable to split, if not very carefully handled. The following illustration shows the three most common thicknesses.



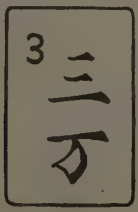
The size of the tiles is not important, beyond seeing that they fit the box in which they come. The standard racks are usually of such a length as to hold exactly 18 tiles which are 10 millimeters, or $^{13}/_{16}$ths of an inch wide. Smaller sizes are convenient when three persons are in the habit of playing, as the 23-tile walls which are required in that form of the game are not as long as they would be with the full-sized tiles.

The next thing of importance in the tiles is the mortise. In the cheaper sets this is little more than a square insert, while in the best sets the mortise is always strongly marked. If there were no other test, the style of the mortise alone would be enough by which to judge a set. Compare the following side views of the cheapest and the best tiles.

The next thing to look at is the design and coloring. Most prospective buyers look first at the Flowers and Seasons, to see that the designs are fairly full and artistic. None of these in the cheaper sets are as good as they were a year ago, the demand for sets having led to the usual haste in production and neglect of detail. The only difference between the 4 tiles known as Flowers and the 4 known as Seasons is the difference in the color of the English numerals and the small Chinese character that is to be found at the top of the tile, above the design. Poor workmanship in the Flowers and Seasons is invariably accompanied by poor workmanship throughout the set. The usual color for the Seasons is red; for the Flowers, green. The following illustration shows about the average artistic skill.



The best sets are usually more ornamental or decorated than the cheaper sets, having little flowers in the circles, for instance, and furbelows of various kinds on the bamboos. Too much ornamentation militates against the player's ability to read the denominations of the tiles readily in play. The principal distinction between the cheaper sets and the best is the more elaborate work on the tiles known as Characters. The numerals are the same, black in both cases, while the figure below, which stands for "myriads" is a bright red.



It is always advisable to keep a piece of gum camphor in the lowest drawer of the set, usually where the counters are kept, so as to prevent the

discoloration of the tiles. While ivory sets are all very well for presents, the ivory turns yellow in time, and is no better to play with than a first-class bone set.

The best boxes are American made unless they are of teak, or mahogany. The red boxes with brass trimmings, in which all the Chinese sets used to arrive, are made of poorly seasoned wood, and have a propensity to come apart, warp, and refuse to open or close easily. The objection to most of the better wooden boxes is their weight, although they make very pretty ornaments. Boxes covered with leatherette are much lighter, and fairly strong and durable.

There is one point in choosing a set which is largely matter of opinion and taste. This is the English numerals that are placed on the tiles. While these are not necessary on any but the Character suit and the Winds, as all others can be read by their face value, the majority of American and English players like to have them on all the tiles.

Not only that, the beginners especially, like to have these figures large, and either black or a heavy blue. In the cheaper sets this is provided for in advance by making the patterns such that there is abundant room for the numerals, such sets being usually ordered by importers to suit their customers.

But when we come to the finer sets, sets that show the highest grade of workmanship in the

matter of decoration, the artistic effect would be completely spoiled by having the English numerals large or black. These tiles are frequently engraved without any English numerals, which have to be put on afterward. When this is done, the inferior workmanship of the numerals is at once apparent on close inspection. If the workmanship on the numerals is in keeping with the rest of the engraving, the figures will always be found to be of a light red, or green, small in size, and harmonizing beautifully with the rest of the design and coloring.

A large black figure goes very well with a tile that has nothing on it but a series of concentric circles, for instance; but take a tile in which the interior of the circle is filled with apple blossoms, or something of that kind, with a delicate blending of colors, and a large black numeral at the top of the tile is an offense. There is no other name for it.

THE NAME OF THE GAME

The spoken language of China is infinitely varied, and even in the same Province one may find a dozen or more dialects. The written language, on the contrary, is absolutely the same throughout the whole country. As Chinese is written, so it is printed. Both are invariable. The similarity of the printed character, and the difference of the pronunciation, leads to many difficulties and complications.

To illustrate. A door has about the same appearance in all parts of the world; but what to call it varies with the nationality of the man looking at it. According to the translators of the Bible, there are at least 168 different words that mean "door." A Chinese ideograph has exactly the same appearance in any part of China; but what to call it differs with the place in which it is seen. The ideograph that stands for the game we are about to consider is supposed to represent the idea of a sparrow, or hemp bird; but the way it is pronounced represents a game of dominoes.

In Canton, and the south of China, they call the game Ma Cheuk. In the north, and in central China, around Shanghai, they call it Mah Jong, and in Pekinese, or the Mandarin language,

it is Ma Diao. In Hong Kong, they compromise, and put both Mah Jong and Ma Cheuk on the title page. There is not a single book so far published on the game, however, that uses the words Ma Diao.

As Shanghai is the port best known to Americans, and as it is from that point that all our sets are coming, it seems only right to adopt the name Mah Jong, which seems to be the most popular everywhere, and is the name taken by the first books ever published by Chinese authors, in the Chinese language, on the game, which some translate, *Mah Jong Ta Kuan,* and *Mah Jong Chih Nin.*

Of course the rendering of Chinese pronunciation into English spelling is an added complication. If you ask a native of the Province of Kwangtung what he calls the game, he will at once give you a sound that is easily identified as something like Mah Chook. But when you get a native of Shanghai, what he says might be Mah Jong, or Mah Jung, or Mah Chang, or even Ma Yong. The Mah is always present, and may be spelt with or without the h, as you please. Robert D. Mansfield took out a trademark in England on May 22, 1912, on the spelling Mâ-Chiang.

For trade purposes an extra g has been added, making it Mah Jongg, and in order to get away from the titles already used by other writers on the game, authors have resorted to all sorts of spelling. From the books already in my posses-

sion, I cull the following, showing variations of the hyphen, and the h.

Mah Jong	Mah Chang
Ma Jong	Mah Cheuk
Ma-Jong	Macheuk
Mah-Jong	Mah-Chuch
Mah Jonng	Ma Cheuk
Majong	Mahjuck
Mah Jongg	Mah Tsiah
Ma Jongg	Lang Chan
Mah Jang	The Four Winds
Ma-Jung	Pung Chow
Mar Jhong	

In Winter's book, we find the word "jong" spelt with a "j," not only in reference to the game, but when "jong" is used instead of "ming," with reference to the little box containing the four discs.

It has been the contention of some persons that as there is no "j" in the Chinese language, by which they mean that the Chinese sound is never translated by "j," the spelling, Mah Jong, is incorrect. They refer to the Chinese dictionaries, which have usually translated the sound as "chi." It was on this ground that the "International Mah Chiang Players Association" so called themselves, refusing to adopt the simpler and better known title, "Mah Jong Players."

This does not alter the fact that in spite of

what the Chinese dictionaries, which we never see, would like to have us do, there are a number of Chinese terms which we have always been accustomed to spell with a "j," one of the most familiar, probably, being a Chinese junk. No dictionary will ever succeed in making us spell this word "chiunk," and who would recognize a Chinese "chioss" in a description of a temple?

One writer on the game states that he coined and adopted the name Mah Jongg, "adding the final "g" in order to give it a unique and original appearance, with an oriental flavor." If he "added" the final "g," the word without that final "g" must have been in common use. Otherwise he must have coined the whole thing, including the "Mah." Harold Sterling says that Mah Chang is pronounced Mah Jang, even by the Chinese. This probably for the sake of euphony.

There is on record abundant sworn testimony to the effect that the game was commonly known as Mah Jong, and spelled Mah Jong, by English-speaking residents in China. Mr. Kliene, the government interpreter for the courts in Shanghai for many years, says he had always heard the game called Mah Jong, and he is confirmed as to both spelling and pronunciation by Professor Stuart, President of the Peking University. Every disinterested person that I have talked to about the matter who has lived for any length of time in North China, and can talk the language, tells me it was always called Mah

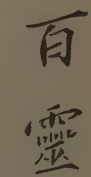
Jong. I consider it a pity that this spelling is not universally used, just as we all agree upon the spelling of names for other games. It does not matter what they call the game in various parts of China, where they have a hundred different dialects, and where in many cases persons living in the same Province cannot understand each other. We have only one language in the United States, and should have only one name for the same thing.

Thirty years ago the game does not seem to have come into its own in China, and did not do so, apparently, until about the time of the Boxer Rebellion. W. H. Wilkinson, British Consul at Seoul, sent to the Columbia Exhibition in 1893 a set of tiles, or dominoes, which he designates as a game called "chung fa" (chung fát). They were from Ningpo, and are now in the Pennsylvania University Museum. The set in the Brooklyn Academy of Arts and Sciences Museum, brought to the United States by Stewart Culin in 1909, is simply called "Chinese Dominoes." Nothing is said about the game played with them.

There are some names which are pure invention, for trade purposes, names which were never heard of in China, some of which have a curious history. Take Pê-ling, for instance, pronounced "bah ling" or "bay ling." This name has been widely copied by various writers, who did not stop to inquire into its origin or its genuineness. The inventor of this name tells us that when he

was first shown the game of Mah Jong in China by a Chinese statesman, about twenty years ago, this statesman called it Pê-ling. As the game was never known to any one in China by that name, nor by any one in America until less than two years ago, and as its advent seemed to be coincident with a confessedly invented name, "Pung Chow," I thought it best to investigate the authority for it before allowing it to appear on any articles with which I was connected. This was not because I had any objections to the name itself; but only to the reasons given for its adoption, and the misleading statements as to its meaning.

It appears that a native of China, educated in California, and now long a resident of this country, was employed about two years ago by a firm interested in selling sets. In his hunt for a new and distinctive trade name, he was aware that the game was called "sparrow," and he also knew that there were no sparrows in China. In looking over the list of Chinese birds, he came across this ideograph:



The upper character is "Pê" and the lower is "Ling." These two words put together are the name of a very common species of singing bird, which we call in this country a lark. But when the two characters are put side by side, as on the cover of a box, each character means something entirely different. The word "Pê" in

itself stands for 100, and the word "Ling" means "soul." This was translated rather liberally as "One hundred intelligencies," and the name adopted as a sub-title for books on Pung Chow; and copied by many careless writers for the press.

Literally, these two characters mean "One hundred souls," and under no circumstances could they be distorted into "A hundred intelligencies," especially by "the greatest modern Chinese statesman." This is only one example of the many absurd stories foisted upon the American people by writers whose ignorance gives free rein to their imaginations.

There are now at least two organizations incorporated under their State laws, which have taken the name of Mah Jong. One is the Mah Jong Club of America, in New York, of which Holland Forbes is president. The other is the Mah Jong Club of America in Los Angeles. It was resolved at a meeting of Chinese and American teachers at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, New York, on October 10th, 1923, to organize the Mah Jong League of America and incorporate under the laws of the State of New York, but when they finally adopted their constitution and by-laws at the Waldorf-Astoria on November 16th, 1923, they voted to call it "The International Mah Chiang Players Association." In spite of this, it is very doubtful if the game will ever be known as anything but Mah Jong in America.

The only original name by which the game has been designated is "Pung Chow." This is a compilation of two terms commonly but erroneously used by American players. The word pung is an essential part of the game; but as pointed out by *The China Review,* for June, 1923, there is no such word as "chow" in Chinese. That word is pidgin English for "eats," and used only by the lowest classes. The correct word is chih, pronounced chee, and means to connect. There is no occasion to use either word while playing the game, as only one player can chih, and he need not say anything. All he has to do is to take the piece and form the sequence. If any other player takes it for a sequence, he must say "Mah Jong," or "Woo."

LEGEND AND HISTORY IN MAH JONG

Relying on the general ignorance of China and its affairs, those interested in the importation or manufacture and sale of sets have put forward through their press agents some most original and romantic stories about the origin of Mah Jong, throwing it back into the mists of antiquity, explaining its seclusion from the rest of the world by saying it was a sort of State secret, known only to members of the royal family and the highest officials. Any one of lower class attempting to learn the game did so at the risk of his head. These press agents forget that the Chinese have well-authenticated records of official acts that go back much further than those of any other nation, and that heads cannot be lopped off, even in China, without due process of law, except by bandits.

All we know about the game itself has been written for us by foreigners, resident in China, whose sphere of observation has been very limited, and most of their descriptions have been censored for us by the trade in sets. Each importer likes to have his own rules. They go with the sets.

But when it comes to the origin of the game, accuracy is no longer required and the imagina-

tion of the press agent has free play. Some of the alleged legends as to the history of Mah Jong make interesting reading. It is to be regretted that none of them is backed up by authentic reference to any Chinese work, in a country that has a world-wide reputation for its literature. It may be interesting to glance at a few of the more popular tales which have found their way into print, and are copied in the text books of various authors.

The writer who goes furthest back into the past for the origin of Mah Jong insists that it was played to pass the time in the Ark, and points to the fact that during the forty days and nights which that vessel spent in an unprecedented rain storm, East was the Prevailing Wind, and has held the premier position in the game ever since. Unfortunately for this version, circumstantial evidence goes to show that it would have been impossible to play Mah Jong in the ark, as there was not light enough on that vessel to see the discards, there being only one window, which we are told (Gen. VI, 16), was only eighteen inches square, although the Ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and three stories high. Besides, the door was shut fast and the ventilation must have been very unsatisfactory. We all know the mental torpidity of a stuffy card room.

The game has frequently been attributed to Confucius, which led the Spanish writer, C. de Oteyza, whose work on the game is published in

Manila, to investigate the matter while in China. He tells us that he has, with the assistance of a good Chinese interpreter, searched through innumerable Chinese documents for data that would permit him to name the inventor of Mah Jong. He finds the game was first played in China about 500 B.C. He does not say how it took 1,848 years to get there from Mount Ararat, as the ark landed there in 2348 B.C. He goes on to say that this date of the appearance of the game in various Chinese Provinces coincides with the travels of the great Chinese philosopher and teacher, Confucius, who at that time was preaching his new doctrines. If we analyze the game we find its most valuable pieces are the three "cardinal" cards or tiles, which are to-day known as Dragons. These are Chung (middle) the Red. Fa (prosperity) the Green. Po (white) the White. These correspond to the three cardinal virtues taught by Confucius; Benevolence, Sincerity, and Filial Piety.

In the life of Confucius, as set forth in the Chinese edition of his works, it is clearly shown that he was very fond of birds, which accounts for his giving to this game the name it still bears, Sparrow, or Hemp Bird. Those who consider the game too perfect to have been the work of any one man are reminded of the great philosopher's favorite motto: "It is important to do well what is done." There is no doubt that the game has always looked very complicated and confusing to

foreigners. Mr. Oteyza asks, Why not? It is a Confucian game.

Among the technical terms still extant in the game the most familiar are "pung," "chee," and "kong." Confucius was of the Kong family, his full name being Kong-Fu-Tze. He married a girl of the Ki-Koan family, whose name was Che, and he accordingly adopted the term "chee," to connect, by Americans corrupted into "chow," for a sequence. It is most unfortunate that Mr. Oteyza was not allowed to take photographs of the original documents that he consulted.

Bringing history down to later dates, we find a sudden descent in the mental and social scale from the intellectual genius of a great philosopher to the matter-of-fact mind of a common fisherman. This man's name, we are told, was Sze, and he lived on the shores of the East Chien Lake, near Ningpo. There were many fishermen in that locality, but Sze was more enterprising and studied the details of his business with greater care and attention.

It occurred to him that instead of wading in from the shore with a net, which is still the common method, he could do better by fishing from boats, but the boats were expensive. His family of nine brothers got together and loaned him the cash to invest in a number of boats, and he employed a number of helpers from other villages. He had excellent luck until some stormy days overtook his little fleet, and his fishermen, who

had never been on the water in rough weather before, were all taken seasick, and had to come ashore.

The family finances being involved, a council was held and it was decided that this strange sickness must be a matter of the mind, as the fishermen were otherwise in perfect health. Therefore the thing to do was to devise something that would take their minds off the rolling motion of the boats, which the men imagined made them sick. Accordingly, Fisherman Sze and his nine brothers put their heads together and after mature thought and deliberation devised the game of Mah Jong, which so completely absorbed the interest of the men that they no longer thought anything about seasickness.

The only thing about this legend that comes anywhere near the truth is the location of the origin of the game as having been near Ningpo. Those who have ever been seasick know only too well that there is very little imagination connected with it. If it would cure seasickness, every Atlantic steamer would carry about a thousand sets.

Another story is to the effect that the game originated at the court of King Wu. Woo, it should be observed, is the Chinese term for winning, or going Mah Jong. This potentate picked the year 472 B.C. to introduce the game to his consort and her court ladies, so that they might amuse themselves with it while he devoted his attention to

the Geisha girls. We are told that he was afterward accused of having stolen the idea from some of the disciples of Confucius. This caused him to issue an edict that the game should be restricted to the Emperors and their friends for 200 years, and that it should be known by the name of Pê-ling, or the bird of a hundred intelligencies, a lark-like creature, or legendary bird, sacred in the Chinese faith, which may now be seen reproduced on many Chinese tapestries and embroideries. The penalty to be paid by one of any other class of society playing the game during those 200 years was the loss of his head. Ladies' heads were, apparently, immune.

When this writer gave the game the name of Pê-ling he spilled the beans. He tells us later that he was first shown the game in China about 1902, by Li Hung Chang, "who called it Pê-ling," which is very curious for two reasons. In the first place, no one in China ever heard the game called by that name, which was invented by a press agent in New York less than two years ago, as a substitute for "Sparrow," under the mistaken impression that the ideograph represented a hundred "intelligencies" and also a bird. In the second place, Li Hung Chang was dead when he showed this writer the game and called it by that name.

I have spent a good deal of time and labor in looking up the history and antecedents of various games, especially cards, and have usually been

rewarded by getting at some substantial facts; but I have never run across such an amount of pure bunk as is to be found in the alleged history of Mah Jong.

On every hand I find persons who insist that they were the first to introduce the game to foreigners, or the first to put English numerals on the tiles, or the first to call the suits by their English names, Bamboos, Characters, and Circles, or Dots; but none of their claims will stand up under investigation, as will presently be shown.

In the first place, Mah Jong is comparatively a new game, and we are not upsetting any ancient rules or traditions in adapting it to American ideas. Because we got the game from China is no reason why we should not change it to suit American ideas, especially as it is not impossible that the Chinese got the game in the first place from us, as will appear presently, and changed it to suit their ideas. We got Rounders from England, but we play Baseball, which is nothing but an improvement on Rounders. We got Poker from Persia, but we improved it by playing it with the full pack, and adding the draw. Skat was the national game of Germany; but we improved it by cutting out the blind solo. We got Bridge from England, but we have changed it a dozen times to suit American ideas. Now they are changing their game to agree with ours. We got Whist from England, and at once proceeded

to cut out the honors, and the "single-double-and-the-rub."

Several writers have called attention to the resemblance of Mah Jong to our game of Coon Can, Rum, or Rummy. These games again, are taken from the Mexican national game of Conquian, which is undoubtedly a very old game. It was well known in the west at least sixty years ago, and probably earlier. I myself played it in Texas in the early 70's. The game has the same elements, striving to get sequences of three cards, or three or four of a kind; requiring every card taken from the discard to be left face up on the table and used to form a combination of some kind, in which it differs from Rum, where a card can be put into the hand and saved for future possibilities. The two games, Conquian and Mah Jong, are also alike in requiring the player to get one more card than dealt to him originally, to complete the hand, and in blocking the adversary by exhausting the pack before he can get his hand completed.

All games "arrive" through a gradual process of evolution, but the evidence of their origin is not always remarked, although it may be very evident upon being pointed out. I have known persons who played dominoes for years without remarking the fact that they were simply flattened dice; dice being probably the oldest game in the world that is played with apparatus of any kind. All games seem to belong to certain fami-

lies, their resemblance to one another in th same group being easily traced.

Mah Jong is not a dice or a domino game, bu clearly belongs to the card family. Almost ever Chinese writer on the game refers to the tiles a "cards." In the great family of card games, w have two main branches; games in which th object is to win tricks, and games in which th object is to match up cards of the same suit o denomination, or both.

The matching up branch is, apparently, th older of the two, and Mah Jong belongs to thi branch, its fundamental principle being to mat up cards of the same suit in sequences, triplet or fours. Its foundation, therefore, clearly res upon some older and forgotten game which wa played with cards, and the transfer of tho cards from paper to bone can be shown to be comparatively recent date.

Going back into Chinese history, while it true that we find no allusion to any such game a Mah Jong, in its present form, we can find abu dant reference to other games, notably chess, an occasionally to cards. From these it is interes ing to trace the development of the game whi we call Mah Jong from a very early period Chinese history.

The game of *Yieh-tze,* whose inventor is u known to us, is said to be the first of the mar Chinese games that led finally to the game Mah Jong. In a very old Chinese book entitle

"Tien Lu Shih Yu," we are told that the Princess Chang Kue of the Tang dynasty was exceedingly fond of this game of *Yieh-tze,* and pestered all her friends and relations to play it with her. As persons in her position usually set the fashion, one can easily imagine that to play Yieh-tze was as essential a part of a courtier's education as it is now a social duty to play bridge. One thing is certain, which is that we have authentic evidence that this game was in existence at least twelve hundred years ago, or centuries before cards were even known in Europe.

Later, in the reign of Hwei Tsung of the Northern Sung dynasty (A.D. 1101-1125) a certain statesman proposed to establish a game called *Ya Pei,* which was played with thirty-two cards. We are told that this game was officially adopted by Kao Tsung, a later emperor, and proclaimed to the people. The cards with which this game was played were made of either ivory or wood, oblong in shape, similar to that of our present Mah Jong cards or tiles, and were commonly called *Ku Pei,* or "bone cards."

According to a rare old Chinese book on games by Chang Chao, a certain Sze Ma Wen Kuang, famous as a statesman during the Sung dynasty, should be credited with the invention of this game; but there is also a legend in the city of of Ka-Shing that a native there by the name of Chu Mi-Chen was the inventor.

In the reign of Tien Tsung in the Ming dynasty

(1621-1628) a game called Ma Tiae (Hanging Horse) was invented. This game was played with forty cards, which were made of paper, but were similar in appearance to the cards used in the game of *Ya Pei*. These forty cards were divided into four different suits, numbered from 1 to 9, just as we now number the bamboos, characters and circles in the game of Mah Jong, to which were added four extra "flowers." These cards were decorated with characters from fiction, to make the game more realistic. The four suits came in some way to be thought of as the four feet of a horse, thus suggesting the name of "Hanging Horse."

There is a game popularly known in China as *Ku Pei*, which literally means "bone cards," and is the modern game of Chinese dominoes. The counters used by the Chinese in playing Mah Jong are marked after certain cards in *Ku Pei*. (See the illustrations of these counters in the chapter on apparatus.) The game of *Ma Tiae* is still played in China. There is a set of cards for it in the Pennsylvania University Museum, where it is described as being from Ningpo, and in which the suits are described by Mr. Wilkinson as "cash," "strings," and "myriads."

From information kindly supplied me by T. E. Pun, Trade Commissioner to the United States, it appears that some forty or fifty years ago two brothers in the city of Ningpo developed the game of Mah Jong from the earlier game of *Ma*

Tiae, and that a district magistrate of Chekiang Province, in which the city of Ningpo is located, took a great fancy to the game, and the people of the entire district followed his lead, and from thence it gradually spread over all China. A very similar thing seems to have happened about

three years ago in Shanghai, when two brothers named White took a fancy to the game of Mah Jong and introduced it to the English-speaking clubs. The social position of the White brothers was enough to insure the game's being taken up by all the best people among the foreign residents.

The earliest known sets of which I can find any record were sent to the Columbia Exposition in Chicago, in 1893, by W. H. Wilkinson, British Consul at Seoul. The tiles, if not the game

played with them, were called Chung Fa. These are now in the University of Pennsylvania Museum. The set brought over by Stewart Culin, who went to China on the Brooklyn Academy of Arts and Science Expedition, 1909, and which is now in the Brooklyn Museum, is labeled "Chinese Dominoes." The set in the Museum of the Long Island Historical Society, Brooklyn, N. Y., is from the port of Fuhchau, which lies south of Shanghai. It was the gift of the Hon. George B. Glover, formerly U. S. Consul at Fuhchau. It is also called Chinese Dominoes. Neither of these sets makes any allusion to the name of Mah Jong, or Ma Chang, or Ma Diao, or Sparrow, although the One of Bamboos in each set is a bird.

When one comes to investigate the development of the sets with which the game is played, one finds one's self involved in a maze of contradictions and hearsay evidence, without any dates that can be verified except in rare cases. The first sets that were brought to this country had no numerals upon them. In other respects they are practically identical with the sets we use to-day, except that the designs for the Seasons are much more ornate, and better executed. The coloring of the tiles is also superior.

Just when the numerals were first put upon the Chinese sets it is impossible to say. Several claim to be the originators of the idea, but they cannot prove it. Joseph P. Babcock says he put

English numerals on the pieces in July, 1919; but he does not say it had never been done before. There are two gentlemen living in New York to-day who were engaged on the Grand Canal in China at the time of the war, and who learned Mah Jong from some of their Chinese companions on a house boat. One of these gentlemen had occasion to discuss a war supply contract with a high Chinese official one day, and this official suggested that they postpone closing the deal until he heard further from headquarters, as they had information that an armistice was to be signed next day in Europe.

In order to pass the time, he suggested a game of Mah Jong, and laid emphasis on the fact that the American would find it easy to play with the Chinese official's set as it had the English numerals on the pieces. Here we have a definite date, as we all know the day the armistice was signed was November 18, 1918, months before July, 1919. Many of the earlier sets had numerals on the Character set only, as the numbers of the other pieces were obvious.

Mr. H. G. Boulon, who was with the American Trading Company in Shanghai from 1913 to 1922, tells me that he first played the game which he knew as Mah Jong in 1914. He had watched the game for some time and understood it well enough to play it, but always excused himself from joining the experts in the tea-houses by saying he could not read the Chinese characters

on the tiles, the real reason being that he felt he would be outclassed as a player. One day in 1914, however, he went to one of the tea-houses to get some contracts signed, and a merchant with whom he did business came up to him with a set of tiles, saying, "Now can read. Now can play," at the same time showing him a set with the English numerals on the tiles. Several similar cases, going back nine or ten years, have been given to me by past residents in China.

Just how or when the Flowers and Seasons were introduced, I have been unable to discover. The Chinese players use them only when they want to make the play high, and upon occasion they will put sixteen of these tiles into the set, instead of eight only. There are no Seasons in the set sent to the Columbia Exposition in 1893 by W. H. Wilkinson; but there are in the set at the Brooklyn Museum, which was brought from Shanghai by Stewart Culin in 1909. They are now universal in all the American sets.

Another interesting historical point that I took some trouble to clear up was how we got the English names for the suit cards. Mr. Joseph P. Babcock, in a signed article, *Saturday Evening Post,* December 15, 1923, appears to claim the honor of having invented the names; Bamboos, Circles or Dots, and Characters. I cannot quite agree with this, as I find those names given to the suits in a book published in 1895, or twenty-eight years before Mr. Babcock paid any atten-

tion to the matter, and I have numerous letters on file from persons who played the game in China ten years ago, using those terms.

The following description of the Mah Jong set in the Museum of the Long Island Historical Society in Brooklyn is to be found on page 519 of Stewart Culin's "Chinese Games with Dice and Dominoes," published by the Smithsonian Institution, in 1895.

"First, there are 4 suits of 9 pieces each, marked in red, green, and blue, with from 1 to 9 *circles*.

"Second, 4 suits of 9 pieces each, marked in red and green, with from 1 to 9 narrow *rectangles*.

"Third, 4 suits of 9 pieces each, marked with *characters*, 'yat man,' one ten thousand, to 'kau man,' or nine ten thousand."

The only term we do not use to-day is "rectangles." As pointed out by several residents in China, any one who ever saw bamboos cut and stacked in the markets or the custom house, would at once recognize the resemblance to the design on the tiles, and in China this set is called "Sawk" or "Sock Chee," or simply "Sok," or "Soh," which are Chinese names for Bamboo.

All the terms used in the game as played in America and England to-day are corruptions of Chinese words, just as the name of the game itself is a corruption. According to Ly Yu Sang, the author of "Sparrow, or Ma-ch'iau," which gives an excellent idea of the fundamental phi-

losophy and intellectual or spiritual meaning of the game and its terms, these corruptions can all be traced.

To begin with, there is no such tile as a Dragon in the Chinese game. These tiles are known as "Extremes," and represent Earth, Air, and Sky in that order by the Red, Green, and White. The correct design for the Red is "Center," as shown in all the illustrations of this book. The correct design for the Green is "Prosperity," which is also the one used throughout this work.

The term "Dragon" probably originated through the desire to have the tiles more highly ornamented in the best sets, so the more elaborate design of the ideograph for "Dragon" was substituted for the simpler one of "Center." The ideograph for "Phœnix" for the Green, usually accompanies the Dragon design in the more expensive sets that now come from China. These are both illustrated in another part of this book, in the chapter on How to Choose a Set.

The names of the sets, Ly Yu Sang tells us, are by foreigners taken from their appearance, instead of from their meaning. What we have always called Circles, or Dots, are actually Wheels, and what we call Bamboos, because they look so much like the bundles of green Bamboos which are such a common sight in China, are properly the Axes, and represent the Axis of the Earth. The Chinese themselves usually call this suit Sok, or Soh, which is their word for Bamboo.

The suit which has been designated by foreigners for more than thirty years as "Characters" he tells us should be known for what it actually is, "Numbers," that being the only suit that bears any numbers in the Chinese sets, although, of course, the numbers themselves are in the Chinese ideograph. They are symbolic of the belief that the destiny of man may be revealed in numbers.

The little cylindrical box which we call the Ming, should be called "Chuang," the original meaning of which was a place in which boxing exhibitions were held, and symbolizes a challenge to play, or the East Wind position in the game.

A sequence is properly called a Ch'i, meaning categorical arrangement. In the infinitive, Ch'i means to take, as in taking a discard. There is another Chinese word Ch'i, meaning to eat, and in many of the books published on the game in China, notably Lindsell's we find repeated use of the expression "eating" in the sense of taking a discard. The translation "to eat," having been taken by foreigners in mistake for the translation "to take," and learned from lower class Chinese, who use pidgin-English, we find many writers using the slang word "chow," which means "eats," and is a noun. It is about on a par with our slang term "skirt" for a girl.

To form a triplet, the correct Chinese term is P'ing, meaning to add to. This we have corrupted into "Pung."

Four of a kind in Chinese is Yi Kang, when the set is formed by taking a discard. This means "to effect a change," or change the triplet to a four. This has been shortened in China to "Kang" and our word "Kong" is simply a corruption.

That English or Americans can ever be persuaded to abandon the familiar terms, Dots, Characters, and Bamboos, for Wheels, Numbers, and Axes, is very doubtful. Habits once formed are very tenacious.

When we come to the history of the introduction of this game to America and Europe, we are compelled to specify just what we are talking about. Do we mean the sporadic cases in which the game was introduced to various family or social circles, more as a curiosity than anything else; or do we mean its introduction to the public at large, on a commercial scale, accompanied by business propaganda and advertising, conducted by persons who were interested only in the sale of the sets with which the game is played?

The commercial introduction to America began in 1922, but the game was known to many individuals in different parts of the world long before that day, and sets are to be found that have been for years in the possession of persons who did not even know what they were for, beyond the fact that they represented some sort of a game.

From the best information at hand I am led to believe that the game was little known outside a few select circles in China previous to the Boxer Rebellion, and that the sets with which it was played were probably made to order, or purchased as works of art, and were not shown in shops as part of the regular stock in trade. We have a parallel in the Japanese sword.

It is certainly remarkable, in view of the popularity that the game has achieved, not only lately in America, but for more than a dozen years in China itself, that some intelligent Chinese writer has not come forward with the facts, which must be well within the personal knowledge of thousands of persons now living in China. That the game has been a leading recreation in the tea-houses in all parts of the Republic for many years is known to every one who has visited that country. A foreigner may easily overlook a thing which is only one of the many strange things that he sees in a land where everything is strange, but a native would certainly be expected to remark a sudden craze for a new game. Our literature is full of bridge.

So popular did the game become that it was bound eventually to attract the attention of foreigners. One traveler tells us that in some places it was impossible to sleep for the noise of constant rattling of the tiles on the smooth wooden-topped tables in some neighboring tea-house. In

many of the gambling houses, which foreigners are all supposed to visit, Mah Jong completely superseded fan tan, which is one of the reasons that the Chinese rules about the preliminaries of play are arranged with a view to eliminating all chance of trickery in building the walls and drawing the tiles for play. Cheating is practically impossible at this game without a confederate, either at the table or looking on at the opponents' hands.

One writer informs us that many of the Belgian builders of the Hankow railroad learned to play Mah Jong and took the game back to Europe with them, but that for some reason or other, it did not spread. It is also stated that the Germans who were interned near Pekin during the war passed many of the weary hours playing Mah Jong, and probably took the game back to the Fatherland with them; but there does not seem to have been any further attention paid to it there.

The reason for this is not far to seek. Among the many business men who traveled extensively and regularly in China there must have been many who were struck by the fascination the game seemed to have for the merchant and official classes. One of these, Henry M. Snyder, the author of "Snyder's Mah Jung Manual," who spends six months of every year in China as a publishers' agent, wrote to the editor of *Vanity Fair* some years ago, calling his attention to the

game and its possibilities as an American amusement, and suggesting that *Vanity Fair* should write it up.

This letter was sent to me in Florida, but I was quite unable to give any opinion on the subject for precisely the same reason that the game did not spread in Belgium or Germany. There were no sets to play it with. The mere description of a game gives one no chance to estimate its value as an amusement, unless one can try it out with the proper equipment. No matter how much the Belgians and Germans may have liked the game they played in China, it is very doubtful if more than one or two of them took back with them a set of tiles, which are not only expensive, but inconvenient in both size and weight for a soldier's kit, or a workman's bag.

The first attempts to make the game possible as a popular amusement by supplying the sets to play it with in sufficient quantity seem to have been made by two men, about 1919. One of these was Joseph P. Babcock, who was at that time the Soochow representative of the Standard Oil Company. The other was his friend, A. R. Hagar, manager of the Shanghai branch of the International Correspondence Schools. We are told that it was in July, 1919, that Mr. Babcock tried to interest Mr. Hagar in the game and the possibilities of exploiting it in the United States. Up to that time Mr. Hagar tells us, he had considered it too intricate and baffling ever to be popular

with foreigners, an opinion which had been confirmed while watching the game while serving as a volunteer policeman during the war. He had also been told by persons who had lived in China almost all their lives that foreigners could never learn the game. (It was so Confucian!)

Upon Mr. Babcock's representation that the difficulties foreigners had with the game were largely due to the want of English translations of the terminology, and that the whole thing could be simplified by cutting out many of the frills, retaining only the essentials or basic scores, and by always putting English numerals on the tiles, Mr. Hagar began to see the light.

Shortly after this, Mr. Babcock put his rules in print. This was in September, 1920, but it was not until two years later that W. A. Hammond, a lumber merchant of San Francisco, undertook the importation of sets in large quantities. Mr. Hammond informs me that up to September 1, 1922, he imported $50,000 worth of sets, out of a total of $56,000 reported by the Chamber of Commerce as having been shipped from Shanghai, up to that time.

In order to market these sets, the Mah Jongg Sales Co. of San Francisco was formed, and was fortunate in securing the services of Mr. J. M. Tees as vice-president and general manager, than whom none seems to understand better the gentle art of persuading people to buy something that they do not really want. Under his able man-

agement a propaganda campaign was started, with exhibitions in all the principal cities of the country, free lessons on the game in all the big stores, and a liberal advertising program.

It is undoubtedly due to Mr. Babcock's original idea of cutting the frills off the old Chinese game and keeping to the simpler elements of the play, that we owe the present popularity of the game, and it is to the enterprise of those who undertook to market the sets upon a large scale that we are indebted for easy access to the paraphernalia with which the game is played.

Of course the pioneers soon had imitators, and many other firms began to import sets in quantities, so that by the Spring and Summer of 1923, in spite of the proverbial abundance of Chinese labor, the shops in Shanghai could not keep up with the demand for sets, although children of very tender years were employed in their manufacture, and materials, especially bones, were shipped from the United States in large quantities.

It seems to have occurred to another enterprising American, Mr. L. L. Harr, who had been in China in 1919 as the representative of the Graton and Knight Belting Co., of Worcester, Mass., that these sets could be just as well made in America, and might be manufactured not only on a large scale, but would be absolutely uniform, so that pieces lost or mislaid could be easily replaced. This is practically impossible

with the imported sets, as they are all hand made, and differ considerably in the size, color, thickness of bone, and markings. Mr. Harr called his sets "Pung Chow," and he also entered the propaganda field with exhibitions and free lessons, backed up by a campaign of advertising and newspaper publicity in which fact and fiction were dished up in a way to make most interesting reading, surrounding the game with all the glamor of the East, and all the fable of a foreign land, embellished by the imagination of a marvelous press agent.

Contemporary with the demand for sets naturally came the call for text books on the game, and in less than a year I was able to collect more than thirty of these. While there were undoubtedly a number of persons who had the rules of the game in MS form, among them two gentlemen mentioned in another part of this book, who were engaged in work connected with the Grand Canal in China during the war, there was no demand for printed rules until the sets were available in such numbers that almost every household had one. Mr. Babcock's rules were first printed in 1920, and were later distributed with the sets in which he was commercially interested. All the American writers seem to have followed his rules more or less closely, or to have copied the rules put out by others who had entered the importing field. Every importer had a score-card and rules of his own; but in the main features they stuck

closely to the original basis of the old Chinese game.

Back in China, the first person to publish a set of rules for the game, with a full description of the set and its uses, seems to have been Mr. Harold Carey, an Englishman writing under the pen name of Harold Sterling, whose first edition appeared in February, 1921, under the title of "Ma Chang," and was published by Carey and Co., in Shanghai. This book was devoted entirely to the original Chinese game, the difference between which and the present American or Babcock game, will be discussed in the chapter devoted to that subject.

Another Englishman, R. E. Lindsell, a British magistrate in Hongkong, came out with another text book, devoted exclusively to the Chinese form of the game, published under the title of "Ma Cheuk or Mah Jongg," using the double "g." This was published by Kelly and Walsh, Hongkong, in January, 1922. A week or two later, Edgar S. Winters published his book, entitled "Ma Cheuk, As Played by the Chinese," and published by Brewer & Co., Hongkong.

After this, quite a number of books were published in Canton, Hongkong, and Shanghai, but none of them had its author's name attached, and all indications of the date of publication are missing. Many of these were issued by shops that had sets for sale, or who took advantage of the popularity of the game to advertise their mer-

chandise or tea rooms by giving away the books of rules to their patrons.

Concurrent with the multiplication of text books on the game, we find various devices for playing it without going to the expense of getting an imported Chinese set of tiles. Sets were made of various compositions, of wood, and finally of card board, but all of them were really cheap or thin tiles, with printed instead of hand engraved faces.

The next step was to take the game back to its original form, and play it with cards. The faces of these cards are exact duplicates of the best tiles, and have the advantage of being large enough to be readily recognized. There being no walls to build, the game is much quicker, and the possibility of holding the cards in the hand, as at bridge, makes it an ideal game for travelers, or in any situation that there is not room enough for the tiles, or that tiles would not stand up. The difference in the methods of play will be found in the chapter devoted to the subject.

At this point history ends for the present, and prophecy begins.

MAH JONG AND BRIDGE

Card players seem to sense that they are on the eve of a conflict between the two great social favorites of the hour, Mah Jong and Bridge. One of the first questions I am asked when the subject of Mah Jong comes up is: Do you think Mah Jong will supplant Bridge? or: Do you think it is a better game than Bridge?

Whether or not it is a better game than Bridge depends on what one considers the essentials of a good game. Is Tennis a better game than Baseball? Is Shooting better sport than Fishing? Is it necessary for a new game to supplant an older one when there is ample room for both? Tennis is comparatively a new game; and is now immensely popular, but it did not supplant anything. You cannot supplant a really first-class game, but you can introduce another game which is equally, or perhaps better suited to some temperaments than the other. You can never supplant Chess, or Checkers, or Baseball, or Tennis. Ping-pong and Parchesi had a rage for a time; but they had not the vital qualities to last.

Bridge players will tell you there is no game that can touch it, and that no one ever mastered it, so intricate and difficult is the variety of the situations it presents. The psychological element

in bidding, the judgment of your opponents, the many different ways in which you may manage a hand, all calling for careful consideration and discrimination. These all tend to set the game of Bridge in a class by itself.

There is just as much psychology, probably more, in Mah Jong. The judgment of the opponents is extended to three persons, whose habits must be studied, whose courage must be taken into consideration, and whose skill must be accurately gauged. The bidding in Bridge is equalled by the selection of the objective in Mah Jong. One is changed by opposing bids; the other is changed by opposing plays. The situations to be handled in Mah Jong are often much more intricate than those in Bridge, and there are just as many elementary principles to be mastered if one is to become an expert.

In one respect Mah Jong is much more difficult than Bridge. In Bridge, once the contract is settled upon by the bidding, there is nothing for it but to go through with it. In Mah Jong the original plan can be changed, if it is found impracticable to carry it out, and the perception of the fact that an opponent has changed his plan, and in what way, requires a high order of skill. The management of a hand at Bridge is controlled by the number of tricks wanted, and the trump suit. The management of a hand at Mah Jong is based upon a nice judgment of being prepared for eventualities; selecting the course that

gives the greatest number of chances for success, no matter what turns up in the discard or draw.

The memory of the cards played at Bridge is child's play compared to the memory required at Mah Jong. In the new game, a player should be able to remember every discard made by each of the three other players, and then, by a process of elimination, to arrive at the discard he has not made, and the tiles he is keeping. Add to this the mental calculation as to whether to go for Mah Jong, or try to get a big score, or to block the game, and you begin to realize that Mah Jong is quite a game.

There are many persons who have so far persisted in playing Bridge, who are totally unsuited to the game. They are not good partnership players. They are either too fond of criticizing the play themselves, or they are too sensitive to the criticism of others, and it spoils their enjoyment of the game. To such as can never seem to find satisfactory partners, and are continually involved in unpleasant post mortems at the Bridge table, Mah Jong comes as a welcome relief.

As a well-known New Yorker, always an enthusiastic, but not a particularly brilliant Bridge player, expressed it, when he took up Mah Jong: "I have at last found a game at which I can spend a pleasant evening with a few friends, and make all the mistakes I want to, with even my own wife sitting opposite me, and no one call me a poor fish."

As to whether or not Mah Jong will supplant Bridge, which seems to be the fear of many who are loyal to the older game, the answer may safely be in the negative, for the reason that Bridge is too good a game to die out. It is not always necessary for a new game to supplant another, unless they belong to the same family, like Whist and Bridge. Mah Jong is a new game, another game, which will find its devotees among the many thousands who never played Bridge, or any other card game, and those who had already ceased to play Bridge before they ever heard of Mah Jong. The new game has already taken a strong hold on what might be called the floating population of card players, who dabble occasionally in such games as Euchre, Red Dog, Stops, Seven-up, or Pinochle, without caring specially for any particular game as better than others.

There are many who will try Mah Jong for a while, and will then go back to Bridge. Thousands have quit the older game because they were "unlucky" at it. If they have better luck at Mah Jong they will probably stick to it. That there will be any wholesale desertion of Bridge players to recruit the army of Mah Jong enthusiasts, is doubtful. It would be a safe bet that even if a hundred thousand sets of Mah Jong were sold in the coming year, the sale of playing cards would not be reduced by a single gross. Bridge is a very fine game, so is Mah Jong. There is ample

room for both, and both are apparently here to stay.

Like Whist, Mah Jong is a very deceptive game. On first acquaintance both appear to be so simple, and it is quite possible for one to play either game for years without realizing what there is in it. They say it takes two years to make a first-class Bridge player, even starting with the natural ability for card games. It takes much longer than that to make an expert at Mah Jong. The acid test of the Bridge player is his ability to read cards; that is, to know what each adversary holds in the last four or five tricks. The problem involves only twenty-six cards out of fifty-two at the start, and when the crucial moment arrives there are only ten or twelve to be located, and they are all known.

In Mah Jong, there are 122 tiles involved in the original problem, and instead of two adversaries only, there are three, and when the pinch comes there are still about fifty unknown tiles, and the skill required is not to locate certain important ones, as at Bridge, but to infer that a certain individual tile is the one wanted by a certain player; or two that are wanted, each by a different player. This perfection is arrived at only by the fortunate possessor of a phenomenal memory, unusual powers of inference by elimination, and an intensively quick intellect. For the first five or six discards it is luck, after that it is brains. The difference between four average

Mah Jong players, and four experts at the game is about the same as that between a foursome on the golf links who each have handicaps of twenty or more, and a match between Sarazen, Hagen Sweetser and Evans. The ear mark of the expert at Mah Jong is sound discarding and ability to block the game.

In many ways Mah Jong is superior to Bridge. In the first place, the deal is not the final verdict. If you pick up thirteen little cards at bridge there is no escape. No matter how big a score your opponents pile up against you with their bidding and play, there is nothing for you to do but to pay the losses. There is absolutely no escape from the slaughter, and not the slightest interest in it for you, while you sit there and drop your cards, one after the other, on the tricks they are taking home. In Bridge you make a bad call, and when you see dummy you wish you could change it; but you cannot. There is no flexibility to the game, except an occasional finesse, or a shift in suit.

In Mah Jong, things are very different. The first thirteen tiles you pick up may be a sad lot; but by the time you have drawn and discarded several times, you may find a remarkable change in your prospects, and you may often beat the biggest kind of a hand to the wire when it comes to the last jump or two. In Mah Jong you can change your objective as often as you like, and there is no law to compel you to finish what you

started to do. No matter how hopeless your hand may be in one respect, there is always in sight the chance to reach a certain goal, and always the sustained interest and excitement of the effort, no matter in what direction.

Both games are alike in one respect. Each will reward the player, both in mental recreation and financial returns, exactly in proportion to the amount of intellect he is able or willing to put into it. Each requires supreme concentration to play it really well; either can be played in a happy-go-lucky way, without much attention to the fine points. The result, so far as amusement is concerned, seems to be about the same in both cases, provided the players are in the same class. If they are not in the same class, the good player at Bridge is going to suffer mental torture, and the poor player humiliation. In Mah Jong neither is disturbed by the play of the other.

I can play more than a hundred different indoor games, having had to study them at first hand in the preparation of *Foster's Hoyle,* and I do not hesitate to say that I consider Mah Jang the most difficult game in the world if it is played in its perfection. At the same time it is one of the simplest and most delightful games of all, if one does not care to put too much mental effort into playing it. Whether one plays it well or ill, the interest and excitement are still there, and there is enough luck in the game to allow any one to win, in spite of carelessness or indifferent skill.

THE CHINESE GAME, AND THE AMERICAN

THE original Chinese game was a rather complicated affair, and every credit should be given to Mr. Joseph P. Babcock for having been the first to appreciate the fact that if it was ever to find a ready welcome at the hands of the American public, it would have to be greatly simplified, and brought back to first principles, as it were. Americans want to be able to *play* a game no matter how indifferently, the first time they see it, without having to master too many complications in the preliminaries.

In cutting off the frills with which the game, as played by the Chinese (which we shall in future briefly call the Chinese game), had gradually been encumbered, Mr. Babcock did to Mah Jong pretty much the same thing that we did to Whist, and we did it without any qualms about ignoring the traditions of more than two hundred years in the nation from which we borrowed that game. We cut out the honors, the single-double-and-the-rub, and played for the odd trick.

In the Chinese game, as Mr. Babcock and other foreigners found it in its native land, it was apparently necessary to learn a dozen or more peculiar combinations of tiles which were called

"limit hands," and some ten or more factors which gave the fortunate players one or more doubles. There were also five or six variations which were allowed only when previously agreed upon, like deuces wild in poker, unless they were already established "house rules." All these hands, together with their picturesque names, are fully illustrated in their proper place. (See Chinese Limit Hands.) But it may be well briefly to point out in advance the distinguishing characteristics of the Chinese game, as compared to the American, which is based on what is sometimes called "The Babcock Game."

Upon a comparison of all the text books on the purely Chinese game, I find they are practically in agreement, both as to the fundamentals and the frills. The first thing Mr. Babcock did, in his first edition, published in the United States, in 1920, was to cut out most of the fifteen limit hands and most of the doubles, and to say nothing about any points that would have to be agreed to before play began. Apart from that, he faithfully followed the basic principles of the game, for both scoring and play, and gave us what might be called the framework of the game, with all its vital parts intact. The only changes that I can discover are that he introduced the practice of allowing any player to double for a clear suit, whether he went Mah Jong or not. Why he did not give the same privilege to other hands in the same class, I do not know.

The cleared suit, entitling the player to a dou
ble, is one of three bonus hands. The others ar
all Ones and Nines (Terminals), and all Wind
and Dragons. Americans have seen the logic o
this arrangement, and now generally allow
player to double for any of these hands, even i
he does not go Mah Jong. In his later edition
1923, Mr. Babcock includes the double for al
Winds and Dragons, but has not yet specified th
all Ones and Nines.

He also changed the bonus for an all-coun
hand from a double to 10 points, which I thin
was a mistake, for reasons which will appear i
their proper place; but he gave a player thre
doubles for a bouquet (four Flowers or four Sea
sons) which is as it should be on mathematica
grounds. The Chinese give only one double, o
two.

In the play, he cut out the Chinese rule tha
allows a player whose discard is not used to tak
it back into his hand and discard something els
in its place. Strictly speaking, the Chinese game
does not include the Seasons, except by specia
agreement, when it is desirable to make the counts
run large. Sixteen Seasons are sometimes used
in the Chinese game with this object. In the
American game, the Seasons are now firmly es-
tablished as a part of every set and it is useless
to ask people to abandon them, except in some
select circles, where they wish to cut out the fun
and the luck, and confine themselves to science

and skill. There have been several alternative methods for using the Seasons suggested, which will be discussed in the chapter on the Seasons.

The Chinese make a distinction between drawn games in which any kongs have been shown, and those in which there are nothing better than pungs. In case of kongs followed by a drawn game, East retains his position. If no kongs are shown, and the game is drawn, the position of East passes to the right. In the American game, the position of East always passes, unless East goes Mah Jong. As East cannot win if the game is drawn, the passing of the position is logical, as it is considered an honor to retain it, and usually an advantage, which must be held by a win.

If two players want the same tile to complete the hand, the Chinese give the preference to the player next on the right of the discarder. In the American game, the more logical method is to give the same preference as is given during the whole play of the hand. That is, if two simultaneously want the tile for Mah Jong, one for a sequence, the other for a triplet, the pung has the preference: but if one wants it to complete the eyes, when he has already grounded four sets, and has only one tile left in his hand, that player has the preference over either of the others.

In the American game, it is only in case two players want the same tile for the same thing, a sequence or the eyes, that the one to the right

of the discarder has the preference, the position at the table being simply a matter of deciding ties. This is in logical agreement with the rule that in throwing dice for position, in case of ties, the first to throw the number wins, the throws going round to the right. When a rule of preference is established in one part of the game, it seems only logical to adhere to the same principle in other parts, unless there is some valid reason for changing it.

There are some rather confusing rules in the Chinese game. For example: If a player fails to call "Pung" before a preceding player has drawn from the wall in his proper turn, but has not discarded, the caller can still claim the discard for a pung, "if he can identify the tile which the other player has just drawn." This is further qualified by the addition: "unless its drawer has discarded, or drawn a loose tile, or is Mah Jong." In the American game all this conditional stuff is cut out, as being complicated and unnecessary, and the simple rule stands that a pung can be made on the last discard up to the time that the next discard is made. This delayed call of pung is the one blot on an otherwise almost faultless game; but no one seems to be able to suggest a remedy that will be compatible with fast play.

For miscalling the hand for Mah Jong, the American rule is that there is no penalty unless some other player has been led by the false claim into exposing or abandoning his hand. The Chi-

nese still exact the penalty if any player is able correctly to name the tiles serving as eyes. That is to say, if the pair is named, and the player in error cannot show that they were part of a triplet, he must pay the full penalty.

The American game penalizes a player who discards a tile that enables another player to complete a hand with three doubles in it, when the winning player already had exposed upon the table three sets containing the elements of a three-double hand. These elements must be either all one suit, no Winds or Dragons shown; or all Winds and Dragons, no suit tiles shown; or all Ones and Nines, no Winds or Dragons. Unless the discarder can show that he had nothing else, or was set for a three-double hand himself, he must pay the losses of the two other players as well as his own. Of course, if the discard does not put the player Mah Jong, or if it turns out that he did not have three doubles, there is no penalty. Many players take this chance. Some think the penalty too severe. In social circles it can be cut in half or omitted entirely.

The Chinese make no excuses, apparently, on the ground that the discarder who was in error was set for a three-double hand himself. They also stipulate that if he had nothing else to discard that excuse shall hold only after drawing from the wall, and not after taking a discard. Further than that, they impose the penalty if a

player has a triplet on the table and adds the fourth, and that fourth tile enables the three-double hand to rob the kong for Mah Jong. Nor is this all. If the discard does not put the three-double hand out, but allows him to get down his

fourth set, and he afterwards goes Mah Jong through getting his eyes, by drawing the tile from the wall—not by getting it in a discard—the player who enabled him to complete the fourth set must pay all losses. If the eyes are afterward filled from a discard, of course the player that discarded that tile has to pay.

In the American game there are only three types of hand that are danger signals. The Chinese game has twice as many. One of these extra hands is made up of any set of three in suit, such as the 2 3 4 of Dots, with a set of each of three Winds, East, South, and West, and completed by a pair of the fourth North Wind for the eyes. If held by the player whose Wind corresponds to the eyes, it is not subject to penalty, as it is not a limit hand.

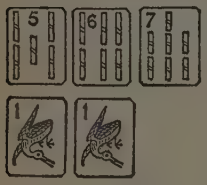
This makes the discarder liable to the penalty for putting out a three-double hand if that hand has exposed on the table two sets of Winds and any other set in suit, as he may have the third set of Winds concealed in his hand, or two of them, so as to be ready to pung the third. The only safe discard, therefore, against such a grounded hand would be anything but a Wind. If the three sets of Winds were already on the table, there would be no such thing as a safe discard, as any kind of a set in suit will complete the hand, if the player already has his eyes in the fourth Wind. The American game does not allow penalties for plays that are pure gambles, unqualified by any skill or judgment. Therefore they should not be considered as special or three-double hands that subject to penalty a player whose discard happens to complete them.

Another three-double, or limit hand, is All Green. This is a hand that contains nothing but Bamboos and Green Dragons; but it must show

the complete four sets and the eyes to win. This hand is not recognized in the American game, the Dragons making it a two-double hand only; once for the Dragons and once for all one suit; therefore there is no penalty for completing it by a discard.

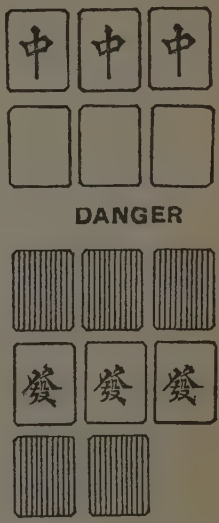
The third penalty hand which is covered by the Chinese rules, but is not in the American game, is three sets of Dragons. This is subject to penalty for putting it out when there are only two sets grounded, both being Dragons. As only the third set of Dragons is necessary to complete this hand, one would imagine that a Dragon discard would be the only tile subject to the penalty; but the Chinese rules state that "any tile that completes the hand" incurs the penalty. As the third set of Dragons might be already in the player's hand, and he might be waiting for any one of a dozen or more different things to complete a set or fill the eyes with ordinary suit tiles, the penalty is manifestly illogical and unfair, as every discard made would be a gamble that it did not fill the hand, with nothing to guide the judg-

DANGER



ment. That is not the American idea of a game.

The illustrations will show what is meant by the danger line in four of the hands which come under the Chinese rule. The tiles above the word "Danger" indicate the sets grounded, so that the danger line is reached. The lower part shows what the player must have to complete the hand. Where backs are shown, the set may be made up of anything at all, in any suit, so that it is either a triplet, four, or a sequence.



The two hands given on page 190 are "limit hands" in the Chinese game, but not in the American. It does not matter whether the fours are in hand or on the table; but the triplets must all be "in hand," and are so marked.

If a player has three sets of Dragons grounded, it is obvious that he will have a three-double hand, no matter what the rest of his tiles may be, therefore no one should be penalized for discarding a tile that completes his hand for Mah Jong, when any one of thirty-odd tiles might do so. Such hands do not come under the definition of dangerous hands in the American game, which

restricts the penalty to hands which obviously need some particular suit or honor, and nothing else.

In the Chinese game they give two additional points as a bonus for "fishing the eyes," and in many places they make a distinction between fishing a simple and fishing an honor. Any card from the 2 to the 8 counts two points; anything in the way of a terminal or honor, four points. This makes it possible to score eight points for the one tile; 2 for drawing it; 2 for filling the only place, and 4 because it was an honor. When there

is no distinction made between simples and honors, the player gets two points for fishing the eyes, or matching the one card that makes the essential pair, whether he draws it, or gets it from a discard. This makes it possible to score six points for it.

It does not seem to have occurred to the Chinese writers on the game that this is not in accordance with the laws of chance and probability, because there are many ways in which the eyes might be fished much more easily than it would be to complete the hand in other ways. For example: If you have an open-end sequence of four cards, there are eight that will fill the eyes. If you have only one card to match, there are three tiles that will make a pair. On the other hand, if you already have your eyes, such as a pair of dragons and succeed in filling an open-end sequence, you get no bonus. If you fill an interior sequence to win, you get two points, but that is much harder than the different ways you can fill your eyes. The American laws do not allow any extra bonus for "fishing" the eyes, and the most that any player can score for it is four points, two for drawing it, and two for filling the only place. This cuts out the practice of giving a bonus for something that is easier than things for which no bonus is given. The logic of the American position I think is sound, as it gives nothing for filling the eyes, when they are the pair at the end of a four-card open-end sequence

SAN RAFAEL PUBLIC

unless the tile is drawn. The other end would have done as well.

In taking precedence for claiming a discarded tile to go Mah Jong, when the same tile is wanted for that purpose by two or more players, the American laws give it to the player who wants it to fill the eyes only when that player already has four sets grounded and is waiting with only one tile in the concealed hand.

In the Chinese game, there is a bonus of ten points for all-sequence hands; but if the player completes the hand by drawing the tile, or filling the only place, he must give up the usual bonus of two points in order to get the ten. They call this "freedom of count." In piquet, it would be called "sinking." This is contrary to the American idea of the logical way to score, which insists that a complete hand, four sets and a pair, shall be scored at its face value as it lies on the table, and that if there are any bonuses they shall be added, regardless of the value of the four sets and a pair. A hand that is all counts is entitled to the bonus of a double; but that does not prevent the player from adding two more points if he draws the winning piece. In the same way, if the hand shown consists of four sequences and a worthless pair, it is entitled to the ten points, just as the all-count hand is entitled to the double, because of its type, and that should not prevent the no-count hand from getting the bonus that is given to the all-count hand, or to a hand which is

a mixture of both types. The Seasons are nothing but bonuses, but they are never allowed to interfere with the 10-point bonus for a no-count hand in either the Chinese or the American game. The only logical way to deal with these bonuses is to apply them as what they are; something quite apart from the hand that is laid down as four sets and a pair to woo.

When we come to the Flowers and Seasons, commonly referred to simply as the Seasons, the Chinese system of scoring them shows a wide departure from the doctrine of probabilities. They usually give a player a double for one of his own Season; but if he is lucky enough to get a bouquet, four of the same color, they give him only one extra double.

It can be shown mathematically that the odds against a player's getting one of his own Season number are only 3 to 1; whereas the odds against his getting a bouquet of either color are about 970 to 1. If the 3 to 1 chance is worth a double, the 970 chance should be worth about 320 doubles.

The American game requires a player to get two of his own number to secure a double, the odds against which are about 40 to 1, which is a little more in line with the odds against getting other doubles, such as three Dragons, or three of his own or the Dominating Wind.

In the play, there are one or two minor points of difference between the Chinese and the American game. We do not make so much fuss about

choosing seats at the table; but we do insist on the double throw to decide the wall and the place at which it shall be broken. Those who think that one throw of the dice should decide both should try that system against an expert, and they would soon find there was something wrong with it. This is not a book of instructions as to how to cheat at Mah Jong, so we shall not waste any space explaining the folly of allowing one throw of the dice to settle both wall and place.

We do not draw the tiles to replace Seasons from the loose tiles any more, the reason for which will be found fully explained in the chapter devoted to the discussion of the Seasons and their uses. In almost all other respects the American game sticks pretty closely to the original Chinese game. Every writer gives the same basic scores, 2, 4, 8, 16, or 32, and the same doubles for Dragons, Dominating Wind and the player's own Wind. These are the essentials or foundations upon which the game is built.

Unfortunately, in their anxiety to introduce something new, or from a want of sufficient familiarity with the subject, a number of writers have given us differences from the Chinese game which are also departures from the American game. These text books seem to overlook the importance of preserving the true spirit of the game.

THE SEASONS

Much of the confusion found in the various methods of playing and scoring in different localities or social circles, is due to the introduction of the Seasons, without adjusting the other parts of the game to fit them. They are thrown into the game among the legitimate tiles like so many chocolate caramels, without taking into consideration their effect upon the rules that govern the game when played without them, and without stopping to make new rules to fit the case.

There are many who heartily agree with the Chinese that the Seasons spoil the game. Others think it lacks interest and excitement without them. James S. Cobb has suggested that if the Seasons are used as Dragons, forming part of the regular hand, to be drawn and discarded like other tiles, and scored as Dragons, we should have a fourth 36-tile suit, all Honors, to balance the three other 36-tile suits of Bamboos, Characters, and Dots. This would require a player to get together three Seasons of the same color, red or green, to make a set, just as he would three red or green Dragons, and to count the set as worth 4 on the table, 8 in hand. If he got a fourth, 16 on the table, 32 in hand. In either case he would get a double. He would also count 2 for a pair of the same color, as we now do for a pair of Dragons.

Another suggestion is to count up the playing hand on its own merits first, with all the doubles to which it is entitled, and then to add 4 points for each Season held, but no doubles.

For those who want the Seasons to add to the element of luck, there is nothing better than to go back to the earliest suggestions for their use, when they were Mandarins in the Pung Chow sets, and play them like deuces wild. When this is done, they are never laid out at the beginning of the play, and are always taken into the hand when drawn. They can be used only to complete sets grounded, never the sets in hand. This is to prevent a player from changing his mind as to where he will use them. They are in this respect something like bisques at golf, requiring some judgment as to when and where to take them. I tried this game once, and found that the rapidity with which a player could woo if he had any Seasons to fill out with was astonishing. We could play about ten games while we could have played only three or four of the straight game.

To return to the legitimate game. The standard set with which the game is played invariably consists of 136 tiles. The eight extra tiles, generally known as Seasons, ignoring the Flower part of it, have nothing whatever to do with the play, as they are never discarded for possible use by other players, and never enter into any of the sets that go to make up the hand for a woo. They are a thing apart, and should be consistently so

regarded. When we say consistently, we mean just that. Their position in one part of the game should be maintained in every part.

Given four players with 13 tiles each to start with, and we have 52 tiles withdrawn from the playing set, leaving 84 in the walls with which to start the play by E taking a 14th. Of these 84 tiles, 14 are barred, leaving us 70 tiles from which to draw and improve the hands. This should logically be increased to 16 if the Seasons are used, so as to allow for the average proportion of 14 regular playing tiles, in the barred section. This is the number suggested by Ly Yu Sang, but for a very different reason, and without regard to the argument which is about to follow.

If we add to these 136 tiles 8 more, which have no business there, having nothing whatever to do with the game as a game, it is evident that we should not allow them to interfere in any way with what would be the course of play without them. If they were chocolate caramels instead of tiles, we should lay them aside just as we do now, and pay no further attention to them as part of our progress toward a woo.

As each player is entitled to 13 tiles from the open end of the wall when playing the regular game, without the Seasons, why should he change the source of supply and go to the loose tiles for a tile, just because he found a chocolate caramel among the tiles at the open end of the wall from which he was filling his hand?

If he draws a Season among his original 13, and lays it aside, he should go on taking tiles from the same place, the open end of the wall, as those are part of the 70 tiles that are allotted for play, and he has no right to trespass on the 14 barred tiles, which are reserved for an entirely different purpose. When players draw clear to the end of the wall it does not matter much where they go to replace Seasons.

In the same way, if he draws a Season from the wall during the course of play, it is precisely as if he had removed a chocolate caramel which he found there, or any other foreign element that had nothing to do with the formation of sets or discards. This foreign element should be replaced, after laying it aside, by drawing another tile from those allotted for the play, which would be what remained of the original 70 of the standard set. The logic of the situation requires that any Season drawn during the play should be replaced from the open end of the wall, as that is the tile he would have drawn had there been no chocolate caramel to interfere; or rather had there been no Seasons in the set, which is about the same thing.

The reason that loose tiles are drawn only after showing kongs is that a kong adds to the player's hand a tile which is not necessary to complete it for Mah Jong. The hand would be complete with 14 tiles, without the kong, as the set would answer just as well if it were left as a triplet. Should

he take a tile from the open end of the wall after a kong, he would be depriving his competitors of one of their 70 chances to complete their hands. As he takes a loose tile for a kong, the 70 tiles of the standard set, which all the players are entitled to draw upon, remain intact. It is therefore never necessary or right to add to the original 14 barred tiles if one or more of them are drawn for kongs. That would be depriving the other players of one of their 70 just as much as if a tile were taken from the open end of the wall. As already remarked, if players draw to the end of the wall, this does not matter.

In drawing loose tiles for Seasons in the course of play, another fundamental principle of the game is interfered with. There is a bonus of 10 points for winning on a loose-tile draw. (The Chinese give a double. This double is restricted to drawing a loose tile after a kong, as they do not use the Seasons.) If we draw from the loose tiles for the Seasons we add eight opportunities for winning on a loose-tile draw and getting the bonus, with no restrictions, making it not at all unusual. I have seen it four times in one evening.

If winning on a loose-tile draw is restricted to tiles drawn for kongs, it should be worth a double. The idea of the 14 barred tiles seems to me to be in logical agreement with the idea of barring a number equal to a player's hand, so that it shall not be possible to know exactly what tiles are in the hands of the players but not grounded.

Another disputed point about the Seasons is whether or not to give a player a double for one of his own number, or to require a pair of them. Recent writers seem to agree that there is a little too much luck in giving a double for one, and that it is quite enough to get the 4 points, which are doubled as many times as there are doubling sets in the legitimate hand. In playing for cleared suits, the possession of two or three Seasons is often the chief incentive, as there is something to double. Requiring a pair seems to be more in keeping with the rest of the game, in which nothing less than a pair counts.

As to the bouquet, four red or four green Seasons, some writers think that three doubles are too much, but after investigating the mathematical aspects of the case, I cannot agree. The odds against a player's getting a bouquet are about 970 to 1, which is several times greater than the odds against many limit hands which allow three doubles. In a year's constant playing I have never held a bouquet.

One more point about the Seasons that should be mentioned is in case the last available tile from the wall is drawn, and proves to be a Season. If they are replaced by loose tiles, such tiles would be available after the game is legitimately ended, which is illogical. If Seasons are drawn from the open end of the wall and the last is a Season, there are no more tiles to draw, and that settles matters.

VARIATIONS IN SCORING RULES

THERE are one or two points upon which players in different localities or social circles do not always agree. This is chiefly because they have learned the game from some one author's book or importer's score card, and never heard of any other way. When a game suddenly becomes popular, every one seems to be anxious to pose as an authority and to show his friends how to play it, without knowing the game thoroughly himself.

The sudden demand for text books or score cards, of which every importer or manufacturer of sets felt compelled to have one of his own, led writers to rush into print with all sorts of rules for the game, avoiding the copyright laws by making slight alterations in the descriptions that they copied, and offering various reasons for their rules being the real thing. One writer tells us that he "traveled extensively" in China for a number of years and made a special study of the Chinese game as played in the various Provinces, finding that it was played in almost every case in a different way.

Any one who knows what it means to "travel extensively" in China naturally smiles at such statements. The difficulty of getting passports;

protection from the natives and bandits anywhere but in the largest cities; the impossibility of understanding the various dialects; and the general hostility of all Chinese to foreigners, make such a "special study in the various Provinces" a practical impossibility, even to a native. All the writers who have compiled text books on the game there evidently got their information from purely local sources. No author who wrote in Shanghai ever lived in Hong Kong, or vice versa. I have known Chinese from different parts of the Republic who could not understand each other's language; but who could sit down and play Mah Jong without any further preliminaries than to ask the local custom as to the base score; "Ten, or twenty, for Mah Jong?"

A surprising number of persons who happen to have been in China at some time or other, and who gained a smattering of the game from the English-speaking friends there, but never even saw the Chinese themselves play the game, now come forward as teachers. I have known persons who played the game in China who never spoke to a native about the game except to refer some dispute about a rule to "the pantry."

Many educated Chinese who could speak English well enough found that teaching Mah Jong offered a way to add substantially to their income, although their only recommendation was their nationality. Most of those I have met had never seen the game in China, or had never been

in that country, having been born here. Two years ago it was impossible, I discovered, to find any one in the section of New York that we call Chinatown, who knew anything about Mah Jong, or Ma Cheuk, or Mah anything else. Now they all know all about it, and will tell you wonderful stories of how long they played it.

The result of all this has been that whenever a writer or teacher who had not thoroughly mastered the subject met with a situation that he or she had not foreseen or thought about, a rule to cover the case was invented on the spot and passed along to others, probably to be misquoted and changed again. Persons who had picked up the game from a more or less competent teacher in one or two lessons, immediately tried to show their friends all about it in a social way, constantly forgetting some part of the instructions they had received, and inventing something to cover their ignorance of the detail.

I have any number of letters from persons who took lessons from teachers or relied on authors who traded on their having been in China, or having learned the game under some unusually advantageous circumstances (such as being taught by Li Hung Chang after he was dead), only to find that these teachers and writers knew the game only in its most superficial aspects.

I never learn a game by reading a book about it. I get some persons who are supposed to know the game to show it to me, and after I have

learned enough to ask a few pertinent questions I usually find, if it is a new game like Mah Jong, that they know nothing more about it themselves than what they have picked out of some importer's catalog or score cards. When I was asked to write a book about the game about a year ago, I felt that the subject required much more investigation than any writer or teacher I could find had given to it. It has taken me a year, devoted to this game almost exclusively, hunting through museums, libraries, and text books; taking lessons from any one that I thought had anything to teach; discussing moot points with any one who knew; interviewing disinterested persons who had known the game in China but never wrote about it or attempted to teach it, and still I feel that I am not justified in offering anything but a first edition, with hopes of much fuller and more authentic information for a second.

The chief points of variation that one finds in different circles are of two kinds. First, some of the minor points in the scoring; second, some of the conditions under which a person shall be allowed to call Mah Jong. The first of these is comparatively unimportant; but the second is vital, as they transgress the fundamental principles of the game, and turn a highly intellectual pastime into a device for gambling, requiring no mental effort whatever.

First, as to the scoring. The double for one or two of one's own Season has been touched

upon in the chapter on the Seasons. The practice of counting only 10 points, instead of a double, for both no-count and all-count hands arose, like so many other errors, from overlooking the importance of changing one part of the game to fit other changes.

The Chinese usually give 10 points only for going Mah Jong. Any advance in this figure is for the sake of increasing the winnings or losings, as it evidently can have no effect whatever on the intellectual attractions of the game. They also give a double for either a no-count or an all-count hand. As there is nothing in the no-count hand but the bonus for woo, the double meant 10 points. In changing the "base score," as it is called, from 10 to 20, the American writers forgot to change the 10 points bonus for these no-count hands to 20, or to restore the double. A little carelessness in glancing at the Chinese scores, and finding both hands were a double, and seeing that in one case it meant 10 points, taking it for granted that 10 points would do for the other also, is responsible for this error.

It is quite true that for a no-count hand 10 points or a double of the base score of 10 points is the same thing, but it is not by any means the same thing for an all-count hand, as the double applies to every set in the hand, as well as to the base score.

No-count hands are usually made by timid players, who "dog" everything, or they are a

matter of chance, and 10 points seem to be quite enough reward for doing nothing particular, but just drifting along to success. The all-count hand, on the contrary, is invariably planned for, even at the risk of missing chances to go Mah Jong, and should be rewarded with a double if successful. Calculation shows that the proportionate difficulty of getting an all-count hand, to say nothing of the risk of being left at the post with it only half completed is well worth the compensation of a double, instead of the paltry 10 points that some give it.

There is a bonus score of 2 points for drawing the winning tile from the wall, or filling "the only place," such as an interior or one-end sequence, or the eyes. Some writers contend that this spoils a no-count hand. The Chinese allow the player to sink the 2 points and take the 10. It is manifestly unfair to allow a pure accident, like drawing the winning piece instead of taking it from a discard, to upset a score which was the only thing left in the hand to play for. In other cases the rules give a bonus for being lucky enough to draw the winning tile; in this case they take away a bonus of 10 points for the same luck. This is poor logic.

There was at one time a similar blemish in the game of Skat, which was quickly removed by American players, in spite of the protests that they were tampering with the established laws of a national game. The law was illogical, and they

changed it, and that settled it, as it always will eventually, when the fault is pointed out.

The present rule is to allow 10 points bonus for a hand that is all sequences and a worthless pair, no matter how that hand was completed. A pair of Dragons, or of the player's own or the Dominating Wind would, of course, preclude the bonus. To have a player break up a pair that is his own or Dominating Wind to complete a no-count hand and then penalize him for completing it by drawing the winning piece is handicapping him unjustly.

THE CLEARED SUIT

The most vital difference between the original or Chinese game and that generally played in America and England is in allowing certain doubles to the player who does not woo; that is, whose hand is not complete. The chief bone of contention is the "cleared suit," that is a hand containing either only one suit of Bamboos, Dots, or Characters; or all Honors, Winds, and Dragons; or all Terminals, Ones and Nines. Such hands are entitled to three doubles if they are otherwise "complete hands" and woo. One double only is given to two of these hands if they are mixed. That is, if the one suit of Bamboos, Dots, or Characters has Winds and Dragons with it; or Ones and Nines with nothing else but Winds and Dragons.

The Chinese absolutely refuse to allow any but a complete hand to score any of these doubles. Mr. Babcock seems to have been the first to allow any player to get a double if he had a cleared suit, whether he completed his hand or not; but in his first edition and several subsequent ones he restricted himself to the suits, and said nothing about the Honors, or the Ones and Nines. In his last edition he has included the Winds and Dragons, but he is still shy on the Ones and Nines.

Why, I cannot say. Perhaps he has not yet seen the importance of being logically consistent.

I have spent a good deal of time and trouble trying to get at the Chinese objection to allowing the player who does not woo to double for a cleared suit, just as he is allowed any of the other doubles when he does not woo, such as three Dragons, or a set of his own or the Dominating Wind. The only reason I can get is that it is not the Chinese game, and is absurd. We do not care whether it is the Chinese game or not, if it is illogical or does not conform to the other parts of the game. We did not care what the long established rules of Whist, or Skat, or Poker were in their native land. We knew they were not suited to the American idea of what a game should be and we changed them. We shall do the same thing with the Chinese rules of Mah Jong if they are found to be defective, either in theory or in practice.

The argument that it is "absurd" to allow an incomplete hand to double for having cleared a suit is based on the statement, first put forward publicly by Edgar S. Winters, that one can teach a three-year-old child to take nothing but tiles of a certain suit, such as Bamboos, and to discard all tiles of the two other suits, and that this three-year-old child will be entitled to three doubles if the result is thirteen tiles of one suit, although they have not the necessary cohesion to form a complete hand.

This argument strikes me as childish. In the first place, there are certain restrictions on taking in tiles of a certain suit, unless they are all drawn from the wall. How many three-year-old children can be taught even that much? In the second place, the judgment as to which suit to clear would be absent, and the child might throw away some valuable counts, such as a kong of Dragons, or of the child's own and Dominating Wind, even if it knew there were any such things, and then fail to get anywhere near a cleared suit before some one went Mah Jong. In the third place, the odds against getting a cleared suit that would be good for three doubles are manifestly very large, or such hands would not be so liberally rewarded.

The judgment required in knowing when to play for a cleared suit and abandoning other plans is not common, even in players who are many times three years old. You could also teach a child to take nothing but Dragons and Winds. Even if the child did not get a complete hand, Mr. Winters would gladly concede to it all the doubles that it had unconsciously and childishly gathered before some one else went Mah Jong, even though not the slightest intelligence or judgment had been used.

Americans have learned to play for the cleared suit as one of the standard doubling elements of the game, and they like it and insist on playing it, whether it is in the Chinese game or not.

There are always two things to play for in the game, the counts that can be made in sets, and the doubles. Any player is allowed to score all he has in sets whether he goes Mah Jong or not. He is also allowed to count all the doubles he can get hold of for Dragons, his own Wind, or Dominating Wind, whether he goes Mah Jong or not. Why stop there? If any player at the table has a right to a double for a clear suit, why not all? The Chinese say because the suit is not in sets like the doubling Dragons and Winds. But suppose it is in sets? Suppose there are no other suit cards in the hand but six Bamboos, and that these are three 1s and three 8s, the rest of the hand being all scattered Winds and Dragons, no three of any of them?

The American idea of any game is to give every player an equal chance. In Mah Jong, each hand presents the possibility of one or more things to play for, and the player who exercises the best judgment in the selection of his objective should be rewarded accordingly, in proportion to the risks he takes and the difficulty of attaining to his object.

The Chinese idea of Mah Jong is to throw everything in the way of advantage to the one player who woos. All the big bonuses are restricted to the winning hand. Their theory of the game, as set forth by the most intelligent Chinese writer on the Chinese game, Ly Yu Sang, who is a member of the Kwongtung Research

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Bureau, is, primarily, to win the game, and only secondarily to count as many points as he can. He says: "To try for a large score rather than to make game is not considered good play. Such a player may succeed in counting some large scores, but he is also subject to large losses, and will lose in the long run. Such a player also fails to observe the true spirit of the game."

Well, Americans add another object, which the Chinese do not seem to think of, and that is the intellectual enjoyment of the game, apart from any scores, big or little. There are thousands of Americans who play Mah Jong without a stake, or for such a small stake, such as five cents a hundred, that it is a joke. No Chinaman ever plays Mah Jong for fun.

Every hand presents possibilities for development, some by luck alone, some by skillful discarding. The first five or six draws from the wall are luck; after that it is brains. There are some hands in which, after several draws and discards, it can be seen that going Mah Jong ahead of others is practically impossible. To score anything of value in sets seems hopeless also. Then the player should have some outside chance to save something from the wreck, or his intellectual interest in the game is lost, and it is just this interest that the American mind demands shall be retained.

For this reason, if for no other, any player

should be allowed to double for a cleared suit, or any other type of hand that the winner would be allowed to double for. Such hands, when they fail to woo, usually have very little to double; but it is better than nothing, and anything else, at that stage of the game, was impossible. It requires good judgment and courage to go for a clear suit after the game is advanced, and these qualities should be rewarded. The excitement of trying to clear a hand in the face of one or more imminent woos by other players is often the only thing left to sustain the player's interest in the game. Even if he scores only a few points with his cleared suit, he had some fun out of it. That is what the majority of us play the game for, amusement and sustained interest; the sustained interest, even in the worst-looking hands, being one of the greatest attractions of this fascinating game. This innovation, first suggested by Mr. Babcock, for the cleared suit, and extended by me to the other and similar types of hands, the Honors and the Ones and Nines, is too well established in popular favor to be abandoned now, just because it is not the Chinese game, unless the Chinese can show some much better reasons for it than the childish argument advanced by Mr. Winters.

As a fundamental principle in formulating the rules for scoring, which have been given elsewhere, I believe the following will hold true:

Every count that can be made in the gam should be allowed to every player at the table the one who succeeds in going Mah Jong scorin only the additional points that appertain to tha particular hand.

THE CRAZE FOR BIG HANDS

The morbid taste that some persons develop for unusual or abnormal things of all kinds has led some misguided players to introduce two restrictions upon the standard game of Mah Jong which, while they accomplish the desired object, destroy the beauty of the game and rob it of all its intellectual attractions.

One of these, and the less objectionable, is that requiring any player who calls woo to be able to show at least one double. The motive behind this rule is evident. It is to make the scores run larger; but in this respect it is only a repetition of the old folly, trying to make two wrongs make a right.

Apart from the fact that it is not Mah Jong, because the first and most important rule of that game with regard to a woo is that the first player who can show four sets and a pair wins the game, no matter what these sets are worth or how he got them. The demand that the winning hand should show at least one double is entirely unnecessary. If the only object is to make the scores run large, it is not necessary to insist on the double. One can play for large scores without being compelled to do so. But if the object of the restriction is to prevent another player

from going out before you get a big score to gether, you are subordinating the interests o three other players to your own selfishness, and trying to make the game fit your personal fancies

One excuse that I have had put forward for requiring at least one double in the hand tha goes Mah Jong is that it makes the games longer as no one goes out too quickly, and there is no so much time spent in building walls. If it is the time spent in building walls that is to be saved the logical remedy is not to build any, but draw at random from the shuffle. If one is going to change a game to suit personal fancies, it is just as easy to change one thing as another.

It would be much simpler to let the game take its natural course. Let the player who can show four sets and a pair go out with his little score which you look upon with contempt, and pay him Make it a condition that if he has a double the game ends right there. If he has no double, the three other players should be allowed to continue the play until one of them can woo with a double whereupon the two remaining victims settle with that hand and then between themselves.

If the object of the restriction is not to be able to boast about big scores, but is to win a large number of points, the restriction is entirely un necessary, as the number of points and their value are changeable relationships. All you have to do is to make the counters worth fifty dollars a thousand instead of fifty cents a hundred, and

the same result in financial winnings (or losses) will be achieved.

The other, and the most illogical innovation ever suggested in connection with the game, is insisting that no player can woo with more than one suit in his hand. The childish argument of Mr. Winters might much more properly be applied to this game as a whole than to the separate part of the game to which he applies it, as pure luck takes the place of good judgment.

There are three ways to play what is called "The Cleared Suit Game." One is to say nothing about what suit you are going to clear. Another is for E to announce in advance, after looking at his fourteen tiles, which suit he will undertake to clear, compelling W to take the same suit, and allowing S to have his choice of the two others, N taking whatever is left. Still another way is for each player, beginning with E and going round in turn to the right, to announce, before looking at any of his tiles, which suit he will play for. In this form of the game they can all take the same suit if they have a hunch that they will be lucky with it. No matter what form of the game is decided on, no player can woo unless he has cleared his hand of every suit but the one he is playing for.

In the Spanish Club in Manila they have a rule, C. de Oteyza tells us, that E can forbid N to play to clear the same suit that E is trying to clear. The idea is to prevent N from keeping

the tiles that E wants. No wonder the Philippines are asking for independence.

The first of these is the only one worthy of any discussion. This is the game that insists as a condition of a complete hand that it shall not only contain four sets and a pair, but that it shall have in it only one suit, be it Bamboos, Characters, or Dots.

This condition instantly cuts out all intellectual interest in the game, and substitutes a childish pleasure in plodding along mechanically, gathering up tiles of one suit only as the opportunity offers. There is no need for the exercise of any skill or judgment. One simple rule covers everything. Keep all the Dragons and Winds and the suit you are going for, and get rid of everything else as quickly as you can. The first set grounded seals your instructions. If it is Bamboos, it is thenceforward Bamboos or nothing, and the most alluring chances to gather or keep triplets or kongs of Dots or Characters must be firmly refused.

From what little I have seen of it, this is a deadly stupid game. Rummy is better. The childish delight in having at last gathered together a hand which is all one suit, not by any exercise of skill or observation or knowledge of probabilities, but just by sheer luck in drawing from the wall or getting discards from other players that could be used at the time, is all there is to it. It is no credit to any one to win at this

game. The only merit that can be claimed is for the player who will not let another win, and forces a draw before the fourteen barred tiles are reached.

Among experts, nine out of ten games played under these conditions would be drawn. As it is, the reports I have received from those who are in the habit of playing this game shows that about four out of ten games are drawn, even when there are no players at the table who know enough about the defensive game to discard scientifically. The trouble with most persons who try this game is that they are such bad players that they have no conception of the necessity of keeping another player from going out. They are so engrossed with their own hand and their pet suit that they are blind to the danger signals around them. Leibenderfer's remark with regard to auction bridge is quite apropos to this cleared-suit game. "Nine games out of ten are not won; they are chucked."

The moment any player grounds a set in any suit, or makes two discards in different suits, you have his number. What science is there in playing against others when all their cards are on the table; whose objective is openly declared; and which you are placidly invited to defeat?

It is true there are players who will play for a big count and give up all idea of going Mah Jong under such conditions. They know perfectly well that almost every tile in the wall will probably be drawn before any one gets a complete hand

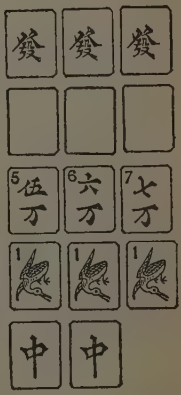
with a cleared suit, so that there is plenty of time to gather up some good counting combinations. But the moment these players have grounded two different suits, they have betrayed their game. They are not playing to woo, because that would not be allowed, therefore they must have concealed in their hands something more valuable than Mah Jong, such as Dragons or Dominating Winds. Now all the others have to do to balk this big hand is to refuse to go Mah Jong themselves and draw the game. Unfortunately those who like this game have not the intellect to see this, or to carry out the plan if they did see it.

All these mongrel games violate the fundamental principle: four sets and a pair, no matter what they are worth or how the player got them.

At the same time it must be admitted there are persons who like these games, especially the one-double game. This usually degenerates into getting the double by clearing a suit, or getting an all-count hand. The all-count hand, without any Dragons in it, is difficult to complete and worth very little if it does not woo. I have tried this game for a month, and fail to see anything in it beyond the excitement of trying for big hands. All the pretty plays of the pure game are lost; the shifting of the objective; the escape from loss with a poor hand. In the one-double game the player who is in bad luck has no defense. All he can do is pay.

SOME CHINESE LIMIT HANDS

For the benefit of those who are curious to know something about the various freak hands with fantastic names for which the Chinese allow a limit, regardless of their face value, the following are given. These are in addition to the hands already shown in connection with discard penalties.



In addition to the two doubles for two sets of Dragons, the Chinese give an extra double if the eyes are a pair of the third Dragon. For example:

In the American game, this hand would be counted in this manner: 20 for woo, 4, 4, 4, for the three sets of Dragons and Terminals, and 2 for the pair of Dragons, total 34, with 3 doubles, 272. This is less than the limit in a 300-600 limit game. The Chinese game would pay the limit, even if it were 1,000-2,000.

A hand containing sets of all four of the Winds, the pair of Winds for the eyes not being the player's own Direction, has been given among the Danger Signals, in connection with discard

penalties, so it need not be repeated here. It is a limit hand.

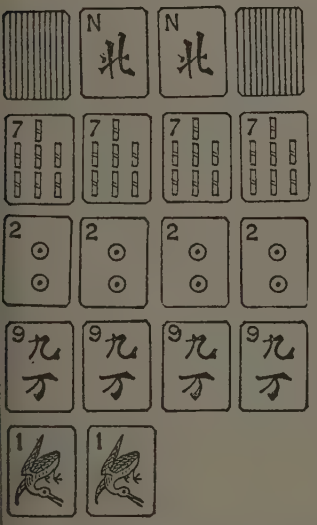
The Chinese give three doubles to the player who can woo on his original hand. As E is the only player who has fourteen tiles to start with, any other player must be allowed to use the first tile he draws from the wall, but he cannot use any discard except the first one made by E, as otherwise he would have several chances. In many places this is a limit hand.

The Chinese give one double to any player who is "calling" on his original thirteen tiles. This of course excludes E, who has the full complement of fourteen to start with. If E's first discard does not complete the calling hand, as just described, the whole hand is turned face down, and the player agrees that he will take nothing from the discards or the wall, until he gets the tile that will complete his hand. This double is allowed even if the player is "calling" for more than one tile. The hand is mentioned here in connection with winning on the original hand for three doubles, as many persons get them confused.

There is a double for winning on the last tile that can be drawn from the open end of the wall, before reaching the fourteen barred tiles. If there is nothing unusual about this tile, it is called "catching it from the bottom of the sea." There is also a double if the hand is completed by drawing a loose tile, which is known as "winning on the roof."

But if the last available tile not only completes the hand for a woo, but is the one of Dots, it is called "fishing the moon from the bottom of the sea," and entitles the lucky player to the limit, no matter what his hand is technically worth.

Much in the same way, when the hand is completed on a loose-tile draw, and that tile happens to be the five of Dots, it is known as "plucking a plum blossom on the roof," and is also a limit hand, regardless of its ordinary value. It is curious that they did not find some excuse for giving similar honors to the one of Bamboos.

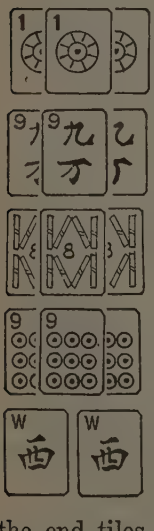


Three of the Chinese limit hands have been adopted, as three-double hands only, in the American game. These are: all Honors, all Terminals, and all one suit. They are illustrated in the chapter on discard penalties. As already pointed out, a hand that is "all green" is only a two-double hand in the American game. In the Chinese game it is a limit hand.

Any hand containing four kongs, whether on

the table or scored as "in hand," with any pair for the eyes, is a limit hand, regardless of its face value. For example:

As it would usually be counted, in the American game, this hand is worth only 84, with no doubles, unless held by N, or when N was the Dominating Wind. If held by E, in a big limit game, such as 1,000-2,000, this hand would net the player 12,000 points, instead of 504 only.



If nothing is exposed until the hand is complete, and it is then found to be an all-count hand, such as four triplets and a pair, it is a limit hand. For example:

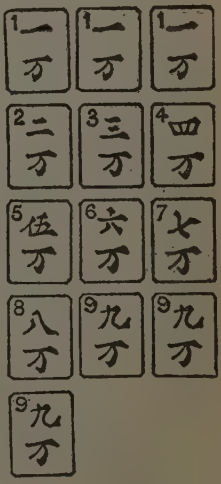
This hand is still entitled to the limit if one of the triplets has been exposed to take a discard for a kong, because it is evident that the triplet was in hand when the kong was laid down. In such cases the kong is marked by turning down one of the end tiles only, to distinguish it from kongs that are to be scored as all in hand, both ends turned down.

Any hand containing a complete set of each of the Dragons is a limit hand, regardless of its value through doubling. Such a hand as the example would normally be counted as worth 288

only; 20 + 4 + 8 + 4 = 36, and 3 doubles. This is not quite up to the limit of the smallest game, 300-600; but it would collect 1,000 or 2,000, in a big-limit game. If held by E, it would pay him 12,000 points, as against 1,728 in the American game. It is these big hands that are the attraction for those who think more of the stake than of the intellectual aspects of the game.

Any player who is lucky enough to arrive at such a condition, during any stage of the play, as to be "Calling Nine Cards," which is simply a more euphoneous way of indicating nine "tiles," is entitled to the limit if he can get any one of the nine from any source.

There is only one type of hand that presents this possibility. As will be seen from the example, it must consist entirely of one suit,



and start and end with a triplet of Terminals, the remaining seven tiles being in sequence from the 2 to the 8. Beginners may find it interesting to study the manner in which any tile of the suit would complete this hand.

Counted in the usual way, the triplets being in hand, of course, this hand would be worth only $20 + 8 + 8 = 36$, with 3 doubles, 288. Another example of a hand that is not quite up to the smallest limit game, 300-600. These are nice hands to hold in a game when the limit is 1,000-2,000.

A hand which is very popular and also very difficult to get, is variously called The Thirteen Odds, or The Orphans, or The Junk Pile. Although it is composed entirely of Honors and Terminals, there is not a pair in it.

The moment any one of these thirteen tiles is paired, the entire hand is shown, and is counted as a limit hand. The only natural count possible with such a hand would be if the pair was the player's own Wind, or Dominating, or if he matched one of the Dragons.

A hand which has become quite a favorite in America, and is frequently allowed by previous agreement, "just for fun," is best known as The Heavenly Twins. Its right name is Two-by-Two, and by some persons is called Noah's hand, as it probably originated in the Ark, if Mah Jong was played on that vessel, as explained in the chapter on the legends of the game.

The hand needs no illustration, as it consists of seven pairs of any kind: Honors, Winds, or Terminals. Like the Orphans, this hand has little or nothing of value in it, the only pairs that could be scored being Dragons or Winds. In spite of this, it is scored as a limit hand. It is not popular among the Chinese, and good players in this country will have nothing to do with it, because it is not at all difficult to get. Many players have discovered that it is much easier to hold five or six pairs than it is to turn enough of them into triplets to complete the hand for a woo.

Any person who will critically examine these fifteen limit hands which, in the Chinese game, redound exclusively or excessively to the benefit of the player who woos, and who will also note the fact that the Chinese refuse absolutely to allow any double for such hands as cleared suits, all Honors, or all Terminals, unless the hand is also completed for a woo, will probably agree with me that the outstanding difference between the Chinese and the American game is that the

Chinese give everything to the winner, and curtail as much as possible the gains of the players who do not woo.

KEY TO COUNTING HANDS

ALWAYS begin with the 20 for Mah Jong, or you may overlook it. Then count the sets, and then the doubles.

No. 1. For Mah Jong, 20, and 2 for a pair of Dragons, total 22. This is the lowest possible score in the game for one who woos.

No. 2. For Mah Jong 20, and 2 for three Simples, 4 for three Terminals. Total 26; no doubles.

No. 3. For Mah Jong 20, and 4 for three Terminals, 2, 2, 2, for three sets of Simples. Total 30. Double for all counts, 60.

No. 4. For Mah Jong 20, and 4 for three Terminals, 2 and 2 for two sets of Simples. Total 28; double three times for all one suit; no Winds or Dragons, 224.

No. 5. For Mah Jong 20. For four Terminals in hand (end tiles turned down to mark this), 32; a set of Winds 4; a set of Dragons in hand 8. Total 64. Double for Dragons, 128; double for only one suit, Winds and Dragons, 256. If N holds this hand he adds 2 for a pair of his Own Wind, before doubling twice; 66, 132, 264. If W holds this hand he doubles once more for a set of his Own Wind; 256, 512.

No. 6. For Mah Jong 20. For four Winds in

hand 32; for a kong in Winds on the table 16 for a set of Dragons in hand 8; for a set of Dragons on the table 4; for a pair of Dragons 2; for a Season 4. Total 86. Double once for all count; twice for Dragons; and three times for all Winds and Dragons, six doubles; 172, 344, 688, 1,376, 2,752, 5,504. If held by either N or S, another double for a set of his Own Wind, 11,008. There is usually a doubling scale on the bottom of the rack, if racks are used, which will give the total up to about 60 or 70. If the original hand is more than that, or there are more than five doubles, the racks are useless, as they do not go into such high figures. You will then have recourse to paper and pencil.

No. 7. For Mah Jong 20. For a kong of Terminals on the table 16; for four Dragons in hand 32; a set of Winds in hand 8; a set of Terminals in hand 8, and two Seasons 8. Total 92. Double once for Dragons and once more for all counts: 184, 368. If held by S, double again for a set of his Own Wind, 726. If held by W, the same double for a pair of his own Seasons, No. 3.

No. 8. For Mah Jong 20. For four Terminals in hand 32; for a kong of Terminals on the table 16; for four Terminals in hand 32; for a set of Terminals on the table 4, and for a Season 4. Total 108. Double for all counts, 216. Double three times more for all Ones and Nines; 432, 864, 1,728.

The following curiosity is the largest hand one

can hold under the present rules: It is held by E, with East the Dominating Wind and these were the original fourteen tiles that he drew at the beginning of the game.

Laying down one of his kongs he takes a loose tile, which is another E Wind. Laying down another kong, he takes another loose tile, which is a Season. Drawing from the open end of the wall he gets seven more Seasons, and finally the fourth E Wind. Laying down his third kong he gets a W Wind, and upon laying down his last kong he gets another W Wind, winning on a loose-tile draw.

The hand is now in this complete form for Mah Jong:

If we count it up, we find 20 for Mah Jong; four kongs in hand, at 32 each; 4 for filling and drawing the only place to win and 32 for the eight Seasons. Total 184. We

now have 3 doubles for Dragons; 2 for Own and Dominating Wind; 3 for all Winds and Dragons; 1 for all counts; 1 for winning on a loose-tile draw; 1 for a pair of own Seasons; 6 for two bouquets, and 3 for winning on the original hand before having to discard a tile. If we double 184 20 times we get the tidy sum of 192,937,984. If E is to be paid double by each of the three others, he gets 1,157,627,904 on this one hand.

These doubles are not the limit. Those who give a double for each of your own Season number would make 21 doubles, making E's winnings 2,315,255,808. On the other hand, some do not allow the count for one's own Season and also for the bouquet. This would cut the 20 doubles to 19. Others will not allow the 3 doubles for an original hand made in this way by repeatedly showing kongs. That would reduce the doubles to 16.

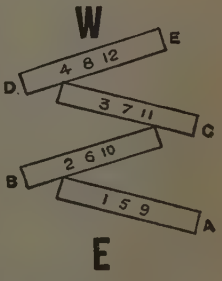
Even at this, which every one will allow, the hand would be worth 72,351,744 to E if he held it while E was the Dominating Wind.

Incidentally, it may be remarked that the odds against getting the original 14 tiles are the odds against getting four Dragons of each color. The odds against one set are 19,083 to 1. Therefore against getting the second together with the first, they are 19,083 times that, or 364,050,000 to 1; and against getting the third set with the two others, 6,946,000,000,000 to 1.

VARIOUS NUMBERS OF PLAYERS

Little has been said about Mah Jong for two, three, or five players, as it was not considered necessary to refer to anything but the difference in building the walls.

Two players usually build two walls each, and the better plan is to run them together in the form of a condensed "M" or "W" in the middle ground between the players. E will call the two legs on his side Nos. 1, 5, 9, and 2, 6, 10, and break them accordingly, while W, sitting opposite, calls the wall nearer him 4, 8, 12, and the one next it 3, 7, 11. E starts to count from the open end (laying the three points of the wall to his right), when he breaks a wall. Each player starts to count from the open end, E starting at A; and W at E, going on around.



In the diagram, if E throws 6 for the wall, and 4 for the place to break it, he lifts the 10th stack from the corner at B, counting toward C. If W had to break a wall, he would count from E toward D, or from D toward C. The loose tiles are placed toward E's end of the W, and as soon as the E end is used up, the players draw from the A end.

There is not much science in this game, as either player can take anything drawn or discarded, but it teaches one how to form sets and count hands. Settling is done on the difference between the two scores. It is sometimes agreed that E shall not be paid double, but the winner doubles his score and wins the difference only.

When three play, the four N Winds and the two No. 4 Seasons are eliminated from the set, as there is no N player. The one to the left of E is W. As there are only three Seasons in play, a bouquet is three red or three green, but only two doubles are given for it. In all other respects the game is played and scored as it is in four hand. Clearing a hand of all but one suit is much easier, as the opportunities to take discards are more frequent. It is perhaps hardly necessary to remark that in drawing for the hands E cannot take the first and third at the end, as in four hand, but must wait until both S and W have taken their thirteenth.

When five or six play, or rather belong to the table, the method of selection for the first game is to throw the dice. The four highest throws play the first game, or the first round, as may be agreed. If rounds are played, E passes the red rack whether he wins or loses, when there are players waiting to cut in, so that no round shall be longer than four games.

At the end of the round, the four players throw again to decide on the outgoers. Those

who are cut out after the first game or round, come in again for the next game or round without throwing, but all four throw for seats, positions, and first E.

When there will be no more or less than five players during an evening, the Chinese method may be found interesting. The one who sits out during the first round has no counters; but he collects a counter from each of the three who failed to woo, and an extra counter from each for every double that was in the winning hand. He gets nothing from the player that woos. The counters to be handed over may be worth 2 points, or 10 each, as agreed. The result is that the outsider takes a lively interest in the game, and has a little stock of counters on hand when he starts to play for himself. As there are four rounds, it is only the last outgoer who would not get any "velvet" without playing.

PIVOT AND PROGRESSIVE GAMES

In playing what is commonly called pivot, the four players remain always at the same table. There should be a prize for each table, and these should be all alike, or of equal value especially in public games for charities. The players can then do as they like about rules and scoring, as they do not come into competition with any other table in the room.

But when there is a special prize, or prizes,

which are open to competition by everybody in the room, there are one or two conditions that should be strictly enforced. In the first place, it is impossible to make every one play according to the same rules. They will not do it in such a firmly established game as Bridge, with its official laws; much less in Mah Jong. In the second place, it is very few of those who attend such games that know how to count a hand correctly, so that there can be no equitable comparison of scores. For this reason the prizes should be restricted to the number of woos made.

Even these should be properly checked up if the prizes are valuable. This used to be done in the old days of big Euchre games for grand pianos and automobiles by giving each player a slip, which was punched by the controllers, who were called to the table as soon as a game was won. In Mah Jong, the controllers would have to take the word of those at the table that a certain player had won. For this reason, in all such games, the winner should be obliged to leave that table and go to another, but for the fact that this would occasion too much standing around and waiting for a game to be finished. It is not like Euchre, where the bell at the head table made every one move, whether they had finished the game or not.

If the scores are to be taken into consideration in the award of prizes, there is not time enough for the controllers to verify all the counts and

settle all the arguments and make all the explanations. It should be enough to verify the winner's count, which an expert can do in a few seconds, unless the hand is extraordinary. From six to ten tables is as many as one controller can manage without confusion and delay, as there will inevitably be some disputes to settle about the rules of play. Advice is, of course, forbidden.

The simplest rule for scoring in big games, and the one that I have always adopted, is this. Have the score-cards ruled in two columns, one for marking the woos made; the other for the score on each game played. If E woos, multiply the face value of that hand by 6. Suppose it is worth 40 as shown. As this player would win double that amount from each of the three other players, that would be 6 times 40, or 240. Put this down on the score-card and add a check or punch mark for the woo. As a precaution, it might be well to have a column for the original score, to check the multipliers.

If E is not the player that woos, let us suppose that the winning hand is worth 40. As this player wins double from E and once from each of the two others, that is 4 times 40, so the score is multiplied by 4 and put down, together with the punch mark for a woo. Both score and multiplier might be put down as a check.

The three who do not woo, put down just what they have, without bothering about differences,

or paying E double the difference, or anything of that kind. It is impossible to use chips in a large game, and the simplest way is for those who do not woo to keep all they make on their hands.

At the end of the play all scores are added up, the number of woos counted and stated and the total number of points. These are easily sorted into their order of rank by the person in charge of the game, and the results announced. In case of ties in the number of woos, it may be decided by the scores that are on the same card, or the players may throw the dice for it.

THE GAME WITH CARDS

Among the many efforts to make this game playable by travelers on trains and rolling steamers, probably the most successful has been that of the U. S. Playing Card Company of Cincinnati, who have put upon the market a set of playing cards, counters, and rules, for the game which they call Man Chu.

It is a much faster game than the game with tiles, as no time is lost in building walls. Positions at the tables are decided by drawing from the outspread pack, the first Season or Honor taking the position of E, the next sitting S and so on. The cards are dealt from right to left, 3 3 3 1 at a time, and the remainder of the pack is spread face down on the table, so that the end cards slip off easily. There are no loose tiles; everything is drawn from the open end of the wall.

The players hold their thirteen cards in the hand, just as they would at bridge, the squeezer marks or indices in the corners being just like those on ordinary playing cards, the same at both ends. The discarding and drawing, punging and cheeing, proceed just as in the ordinary tile game, and all the rules that govern the play with the tiles are followed.

As soon as any player woos, he shows his hand counts it up and is paid. The size of the designs on the cards, which are of the same size as ordinary playing cards, makes it very easy to read the discards and grounded sets. The manufacturers were good enough to ask me to select the designs and to write the rules for the game. In some respects I prefer it to the tiles, and many find it much easier on the eyes.

THE LAWS OF MAH JONG

TO GOVERN THE AMERICAN GAME

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THE PLAYERS

1. A Mah Jong table is complete with 4 players, whose positions are determined by each in turn throwing two dice. The highest throw is known as East, and has the choice of seats. The next highest sits on his right, and is South. The next highest sits opposite East, and is West. The fourth player is North.

2. There are no partnerships, each player being for himself.

3. All throws shall be made with two dice, having upon their faces the numbers from 1 to 6, and the total of the two upper faces shall be the throw. In case of ties, the first player to throw the number, wins. [If Chinese dice are used, the blank face is 1.]

4. If there are more than four candidates for play, five or six may belong to the table. All throw the dice, and the four highest play the first "round." At the end of the round, the four who are playing throw again to decide the outgoers. Those who are cut out after the first round, come

in again for the third round, without throwing

5. A round is ended when the player wh started as E becomes E again, after having los that position. A round must be at least fou games, and as many more as the number of time E retains his position by winning.

6. When there are only three players availabl to make up a table, they take their positions b the throw of the dice in the order of East, Soutl and West. The four North Winds and the tw No. 4 Seasons are eliminated from the set, a there is no N player.

THE SET

7. The standard set consists of 136 pieces, di vided into five suits; Bamboos, Characters, Cir cles, Winds, and Dragons. Each suit must con tain four duplicates of each piece. The Bamboos Characters, and Circles are numbered from 1 to 9 The Winds are East, South, West, and North The Dragons, or Colors, Red, White, and Green

8. Any game played with a set which is prove to be imperfect is void, provided the imperfec tion is discovered and announced before an player announces Mah Jong; but any previou scores made with that set shall stand. Tiles no of uniform size, thickness, or color, or that ca be readily identified by the edges, may be deeme imperfect.

9. To the standard set may be added 8 extr

pieces, commonly called Seasons, or Flowers and Seasons. These are duplicates of the numbers 1 to 4, which correspond to the four Winds; 1 being E, 2 S, 3 W, and 4 N. The Flowers are distinguished from the Seasons by the difference in the color of the numerals. A group of four Flowers, or four Seasons, is called a bouquet.

10. If racks are used, each player is responsible for the proper return of tiles to the table before shuffling for a new deal.

11. If one rack is red, it shall be passed to the player who is E for that deal.

12. The players having taken their seats, the entire 136 (or 144) tiles are placed on the table, face down, and thoroughly shuffled by the four players simultaneously.

BUILDING THE WALLS

13. Each player then draws at random a sufficient number of tiles to build a wall in front of him two tiles high and of the same length as that built by each of the other players, which must be 17 tiles long without the Seasons or 18 with the Seasons. [When three play, the walls are each 23 tiles long.] The four walls (each two tiles high) are then pushed together to form a hollow square.

14. If one wall is short and another long, the adjustment may be made without penalty before play begins. If one wall is too long or too short,

the others being correct, the missing tiles mus be found, and that wall reshuffled and rebuilt Should this error be due to any player havin left some of his tiles in the rack from the pre vious hand, he shall pay 10 points to each of th others.

15. It shall be the duty of each player to atten to the part of the wall immediately in front o him; swinging it into position for the draw; re placing loose tiles if they are drawn in the cours of play, etc.

16. If any tiles shall be exposed during th building of the wall, so that their position i marked and known, that wall must be reshuffle and rebuilt.

BREAKING THE WALLS

17. The walls built, each player in turn begi ning with E, shall throw the two dice. Th highest throw shall be E for the first game, wit out any change in the position of the players a the table, who retain their original seats. Thi player shall now throw the dice to determin which wall shall be broken. Starting with hi own wall as No. 1, and counting to the right unt he reaches the number thrown, his own wall wi be 5 or 9; that on his right, 2, 6 or 10; that opp site him, 3, 7, or 11; that on his left, 4, 8, or 1

18. The player whose wall is to be broken sha then cast the dice again, and shall add this secon

throw to the number thrown for his wall. Taking the total of the two throws, and counting the stacks of tiles in his own wall, from right to left until he arrives at a number corresponding to the total of the two throws, the stack arrived at shall be lifted and placed on the top of the wall to the right of the opening, the lower tile of the two next the opening, the upper one farther from it. These are known as "Loose tiles." Should the number thrown exceed the number of stacks in the player's own wall, it must be carried on to the next wall on his left.

19. It shall be the duty of the player whose wall is broken to make another break to the right of the opening, separating 7 stacks, or 14 tiles, including the loose tiles, from the rest. These 14 tiles cannot be used in play, and are reserved for replacing kongs. If they are reached before any player goes Mah Jong, the game is drawn; the hands are all thrown up, and the position of E passes to the right.

GETTING THE HANDS

20. Beginning with E, each player in turn to the right shall take 2 stacks, or 4 tiles, from the end of the wall at the left of the opening. Then each in turn takes 4 more, until each has 12. Each then takes 1 tile, making 13 in hand, and finally E takes a 14th.

21. The player whose wall is being drawn from

shall swing the open end of it toward the cente of the table, in position for all to reach it easily and shall see that each player takes tiles in th proper order. Any player taking stacks out o turn, or from the wrong place, must be stoppe immediately and the tiles replaced.

22. Any player drawing more or less than 1 must correct the error before East's first discard or he shall play with the foul or stale hand, a the case may be, and settle accordingly at th end.

23. Any player knocking over and exposing tile or tiles while drawing to his hand, shall tak those tiles into his own hand and allow the playe to whom such tiles would have gone to take th tiles that would have gone to the player in erro If the number is greater than enough to fill hi hand or in another part of the walls, the surplu ones shall be reshuffled with at least six of th adjoining stacks in that part of the wall, and th wall rebuilt. There is no penalty for exposin any tile or tiles properly belonging to one's ow hand.

THE PLAY

24. If the Seasons are included in the set, i shall be the duty of each player in turn, begi ning with E, to lay upon the table face up, an to his left, any Seasons he may have drawn, an to replace them immediately by drawing an equa

number of tiles from the open end of the wall. Should the tile so drawn prove to be another Season, it shall not be replaced until each of the other players has replaced any Seasons drawn in the original 13 tiles. Seasons are not considered as part of the playing hand, which must always contain at least 13 tiles, besides Seasons. (See Law for kongs.)

25. If any player fail to show and replace a Season before he makes his first discard, he shall not be allowed to replace it; but must play with the stale hand.

26. Seasons drawn during the course of the play shall be replaced by drawing from the open end of the wall before discarding. Any player failing to replace a Season before discarding must finish the game with a stale hand. All Seasons drawn during play must be shown at once, without taking them into the hand.

27. E begins by discarding any one of his 14 tiles, laying it face up, between the walls, toward the center of the table.

[Beginners may be permitted to name their discards, but the practice is not to be recommended unless there is a penalty for miscalling a discard, such as 10 points to each player.]

THE DISCARDS

28. Discards may be used in two ways. Any player at the table who has already in his hand

two or three of the same suit and denomination may call "Pung," placing the tiles from his hand on the table, immediately to his left, or in a row in front of his rack, and adding the discard to them, discarding from his hand any tile he pleases, in place of the tile punged.

29. Should a player pung a piece and then draw from the wall before discarding, his hand is foul; but the player to his right may insist on his discarding the drawn piece, and breaking up the pung, returning two tiles to his hand, leaving it as it was before the pung. If the following player says nothing, the hand remains foul.

30. Should a player already have in his hand three of the same suit and denomination as the discard, he may pung the discard and lay down either three or four tiles. If he wishes to show all four he calls "Kong," instead of Pung, and must take a loose tile before discarding, or his hand will be stale.

31. When any player pungs or kongs a discard, the player to his right has the first say to the tile discarded after the pung or kong, the intervening players, if any, losing their turn.

32. If no one pungs the discard, the player immediately on the right of the discarder may use the discarded tile to fill a sequence of not more or less than three tiles of the same suit in numerical order by laying down two tiles from his hand and taking the discard from the table, joining it to them. No other player can use a dis-

card to complete a sequence, unless it makes him Mah Jong. Every player using a discard must afterward discard a tile in its place, unless he is Mah Jong.

33. In case the same discard can be used for a sequence by the player on the right of the discarder, and for a pung or kong by some other player, the pung or kong has the preference; but he must announce his claim before the player with the sequence discards. [See Law 51.] [Beginners make the mistake of calling "chow" before filling a sequence. There is no such word as chow in Chinese, and there is no necessity to say anything, as no other player could use the discard for a sequence. The Chinese name for a sequence is "chee," meaning, to connect. Chow is pidgin English for "eats."]

34. Under no circumstances may a player take a discard from the table into his hand. It must be left face upward on the table, and the other tiles necessary to form the set added to it. Should the discard be taken into the hand, any player at the table may demand that it be returned to the table and not used.

35. Should a player inadvertently discard two tiles instead of one, he may take back whichever he chooses, unless one has already been claimed for a pung or chee. If both discards can be punged by different players, the one nearer to the right of the player in error shall take the tile; the other shall be taken back by the discarder.

36. As soon as a discard is passed up as not wanted for either pung or chee it is dead, and cannot be used for any purpose, but all such discards must remain upon the table face up, and open to inspection.

37. If a player take up in error a discard that is dead, he must be at once corrected, or the take-up must stand; but if the set laid down is not correct, no one need call attention to the error until the final count. If the player has discarded, the imperfect set cannot be corrected. Should he see his error in time, he has a right to be informed as to the last discard, and may use it, if he can.

38. Any player may be asked what tile he has just discarded, and must answer correctly; but any player offering any information as to who discarded any of the tiles that are dead may be called upon to pay 10 points to each of the other players.

DISCARD PENALTIES

39. Unless a player can show that he has a waiting hand (wanting only one tile to go Mah Jong) which would give him at least three doubles, he may be called upon to pay all the losses at the table if he discards a tile that enables another player to go Mah Jong with a three-double hand, when that player has already exposed on the table nine or more tiles of one suit; or three sets of Winds and Dragons, or three sets of ones and nines, or any hand which can pung

one of the same suit or honors as those he has shown on the table. If the discard is not used to complete the exposed hand for three doubles, or if it is used, but there are not three doubles, there is no penalty.

40. A player whose hand is all one suit cannot be penalized if he is forced to discard that suit and the discard allows a three-double hand to woo. A player having two suits only, no Winds or Dragons, cannot be penalized if his discard allows either of two three-double hands to woo. In either case the three-double woo must be without any, or all Winds or Dragons, and already have nine or more tiles on the table.

41. A player whose hand is either stale or foul must continue to draw and discard until some other player goes Mah Jong. If his hand is foul—too many tiles—he can win nothing, but must pay each of the others the full value of their hands. If his hand is stale—too few tiles—he cannot go Mah Jong, but he can still pay and take the difference between his score and that of the two who do not go Mah Jong.

DRAWING FROM THE WALL

42. If the discard is not used by any player, the player immediately to the right of the discarder shall draw the end tile from the open end of the wall and take it into his hand without showing it, after which he may discard any tile

he pleases. The moment any tile is drawn from the wall in this manner, all previous discards are dead. If the previous discard is claimed by a delayed call of pung, the tile about to be drawn from the wall must be replaced.

43. Each player in turn to the right shall continue to draw and discard in this manner until some one announces Mah Jong, or the game is drawn.

44. Should any player, whose turn it is to draw, inadvertently knock over and expose any tile other than the one he draws, or is about to draw, he shall take the exposed tile, instead of the one he would have drawn. If he has already seen or exposed the tile he would have drawn he shall take it, and the tile accidentally exposed shall be turned face down, at least six of the adjoining stacks shuffled with it, and that part of the wall rebuilt. If more than one tile is accidentally exposed, they shall all be shuffled with six adjoining stacks, and the wall rebuilt, the player taking the tile that rightfully belongs to him.

45. Should a player draw from the wrong side of the opening, and see the face of the tile before being corrected, the tile must be replaced and at least six stacks of that part of the wall shuffled and the wall rebuilt.

46. Any player who touches a tile at the open end of the wall when it is his turn, as if about to draw it, cannot change his intention. But if he

touches a discard, he may afterward reject it, even if he has exposed the set, provided he has not discarded.

47. Any player who fails to draw a tile to replace a Season, or a loose tile to replace a kong, cannot correct the error after he has discarded. His hand remains stale, or short.

FORMING SETS

48. Any combination once laid on the table and followed by a discard must so remain. No tile once used in a set can be taken to form another set. Sequences cannot be enlarged beyond three tiles, nor any part of them borrowed to fill other sets.

49. Three of a kind already in hand (a gan) can be shown in order to take the fourth from another player's discard; but if the three of a kind is already a pung, the fourth cannot be taken from the discards. Should the player draw the fourth from the wall, however, he may add it to the pung to form a hoi kong. The player is not obliged to show the whole four in taking a discard for a hoi kong; but may show only two of those in his hand, as for a pung, if he chooses, reserving the fourth for a possible sequence.

50. A player having a pung on the table and the fourth concealed in his hand, can add the fourth only immediately after he draws from the wall, and not after taking a discard. If the fourth

is not shown until some player goes Mah Jong, the score for four is lost, and the set is worth only a pung.

51. In case two players want the same discard; one to form a set, the other to go Mah Jong, the Mah Jong call has the preference. In case both want to go Mah Jong, the one nearer to the right of the discard wins, a pung taking precedence of a chee, as usual, and filling the eyes taking precedence of either.

52. The only occasion upon which a player may take a discard to form a set of less than three tiles, is when the discard will complete his hand by forming the eyes (the pair that is essential in every Mah Jong hand). He then can have nothing to discard, as every tile of his 14 or more fits somewhere.

53. Any player taking a discard for a set to which it does not belong may correct his error by placing the proper combination on the table before he discards. If he discovers that he cannot legitimately use the discard, he may return it to the table without penalty. If he discards without discovering the error, it shall be the privilege of any other player to claim the tile erroneously used, under the provisions of Law 57.

DRAWING AND SHOWING FOURS

54. A player having a gan in hand, and drawing the fourth for an um kong (all four in hand)

may show the whole four or none of them. If the four are shown, the two end tiles shall be turned face down, and a loose tile drawn before discarding. If the four are not shown until some player calls Mah Jong, the four in hand score as three only, as the hand is stale. The um kong can be shown only immediately after drawing from the wall. Any player finding an um kong in his original 13 tiles may show it before E discards, so as to restore his hand to 13 tiles by drawing.

55. Should a player neglect to turn down the end tiles of an um kong before discarding, he cannot score it except as a hoi kong.

56. If a player has a pung on the table and draws the fourth and that fourth makes another player Mah Jong, the kong can be robbed, leaving the pung as it stood. If the player with the pung suspects the fourth would be used by another to go Mah Jong, he can conceal it in his hand by refusing to advance his pung to a hoi kong. If the four are all in hand (um kong) the kong cannot be robbed.

FORMING FALSE SETS

57. If a player takes a discard and shows a combination which is not correct, such as one tile of the wrong suit or denomination, and does not discover his error until he has discarded, the error cannot be corrected. But it shall be the privilege of any player who can, and wishes to

use the tile erroneously taken, to call attention to the error, even after the player in error has discarded. If he does not use the tile after insisting on the correction, he may be called upon to pay 50 points to each of the players who allowed the error to pass. If two players simultaneously call attention to the error, and neither can use the tile, they pay the fourth 25 each.

58. Any player calling attention to any error made by another, either in failing to discard, drawing too many tiles, failing to mark um kongs, showing a false set, or anything that would affect that player's score as against the others, may be called upon to pay 50 points to each of those not at fault.

GOING MAH JONG

59. As soon as any player completes his hand by getting together four sets and a pair, whether these are all on the table, all in hand, or some of each, he announces the fact by calling "Woo," or Mah Jong. [Woo is the correct call; as Mah Jong is the name of the game. In Canton and Hong Kong, it is Ma Cheuk, which means "The eyes," or "The hand is now complete." Woo means, "to win"; or, "I win."] The four sets and pair must be independent of Seasons. The tile to complete the hand, may be drawn, punged, or cheed, to make a triplet, a sequence, or the final pair.

60. Every tile in the Mah Jong hand must be shown face up, for verification by the other players. Gans are shown by placing one of the three face up on the top of the two others. Filling the only place or drawing the winning piece, is indicated by standing the tile on end. E wins or loses double the value of the Mah Jong hand.

DRAWN GAME

61. In case no player calls woo until the last 14 prohibited tiles are reached, less those drawn for kongs, the game is drawn. All hands are abandoned, no one scores anything, and the tiles are turned face down and shuffled for the next game, the position of E passing to the right. The dice are thrown afresh to decide the wall to be broken, and at what point.

CORRECTING SCORES

62. If the Mah Jong player fails to mark his sets properly, or fails to count enough for the hand, he shall not be corrected by any of the others. Any player correcting him may be called upon to pay the difference between the amount claimed and the correct score for each of those who said nothing. If he overcounts, he must be corrected without penalty. It is too late to call attention to the error of an overcount, or correct

an undercount, when the last player has paid the winner.

63. In case the call of woo is found to be incorrect, the hand not being complete, or stale, or foul, the player in error may take up all the pieces that were in hand, leaving the pungs and chees on the table, and discard, without penalty, provided the erroneous call has not caused any other player to expose or abandon any or all of his concealed pieces.

64. Should any player have exposed any of his concealed pieces, or thrown any part of his pungs or chees into the discard, on account of the false claim of Mah Jong, the player in error may be called upon to pay half the limit to each of the others, and the full limit to E, if he is not E himself. If he is E, he shall pay the full limit to each of the three others. All the hands are abandoned, and the position of E passes.

SETTLING THE SCORES

65. The winner's hand having been shown, counted, and admitted as correct, all payments shall be made with suitable counters of various denominations, the value of which, and the limit of payments, shall be matter of agreement before play begins. The winner shall be paid first, by each of the three others, the full value of his hand, regardless of what any other player may

have. If he is E, he shall receive double the face value of his hand. If he is not E, the player who is E shall pay him double. The winner pays nobody.

66. The winner having been paid, it shall be his duty to turn all the discards face down, ready for the next shuffle. He shall have nothing to say of errors of any kind made by the three other players in counting their hands, under the same penalty as Law 69.

67. Each of the others in turn to the right then exposes his hand face up, to show that he has neither more nor less than the correct number of tiles. He then separates the worthless part of his hand from the sets that score, and announces the value of his hand. This is subject to correction as under Law 69. Each pays to the others the difference between their respective scores, E paying or taking double this difference, if E is not the player who made Mah Jong.

68. Each player shall announce what he claims as the value of his entire hand. In case of any error in his favor, such as calling a set in hand which was actually punged, it must be corrected before he is paid. The player paying him without correcting the error has no redress.

69. Any error in counting the hand which is against the player, such as forgetting to count a set at its full value, or overlooking a double, shall not be corrected under penalty of having to pay

the difference between the score claimed and the correct score for each of the other players who said nothing, and who have not yet settled with the player in error. If two simultaneously call attention to the error, they shall divide the penalty due to the third player who has said nothing, and has not yet settled.

70. When the last payment has been made, it is too late to correct any errors, and all the tiles must be turned face down ready for the next shuffle.

71. Any player whose hand is foul, having a greater number of tiles than he is entitled to, shall pay the full scores of each of the others, without deducting anything. They pay him nothing.

72. Any player whose hand is stale, containing too few tiles, must still pay the player who woos in full, as usual; and may count anything he has as a deduction or excess in comparing his scores with the two who did not woo, except that he cannot claim anything for a cleared suit. A stale hand cannot woo.

73. The limit of payment shall be 300 points playing without the Seasons; or 500 points with the Seasons. East shall pay or collect double this amount.

74. Special scores for freak or limit hands shall be matter of agreement, if such hands are allowed to be shown.

ROUNDS

75. If E fails to woo, the position passes automatically to the player on the right, who was S. This makes the player S who was W, and so on. As long as E wins, he retains his position as E, the others retaining their positions also.

[In club play, or when there are more than four belonging to the table, it should be agreed that E shall pass at the end of each game, whether he wins or loses, so as to limit a round to four games.]

76. The player who started the game as E should have on his right hand the Ming box, and should take from it the four discs, placing the E disc face up, the others face down. When E loses his position, he passes the Ming box to the player on his right, who now becomes E. This player may also be marked by the passing of a red rack, if racks are used. The discs are retained by the original E. When S loses he passes the Ming box to W, and so on.

77. When the Ming box, or the red rack, gets round to the original E, he turns the E disc face down, and turns the S disc face up. This indicates that the first, or East Wind round, is finished, and that they are now playing the South Wind round. When the Ming box comes round to him again, he turns down the S disc, and turns up the W disc. Finally he turns up the N disc. When the Ming box arrives at his position for the

fourth time, the game is at an end, and if it is t
be continued, the dice must be cast again fo
seats, etc., as at the start.

PREVAILING OR DOMINATING WIND

78. During the first round, East is the Dom
nating Wind, on the second round, South is th
Dominating Wind. On the third round it is Wes
and on the fourth round it is North. This affec
the scoring, as tiles of the Dominating Wind ar
more valuable than those of the other wind
any player holding two of the Dominating Win
counting them the same as a pair of Dragon
Three or four of the Dominating Wind is a doubl

79. Special games, such as allowing Mah Jon
only to hands with a "cleared suit," whether th
suit to be cleared is announced in advance or no
or games in which the winning hand must sho
a double in addition to the four sets and a pai
shall be matter of special agreement among th
players, who shall make their own rules for suc
games.

80. Special hands, such as The Thirteen Odd
The Four Lucks, All Green, The Heavenly Peac
of which there are fifteen in the Chinese gam
but which are not proper to the American gam
shall be matter of special agreement among th
players, who shall make their own rules for suc
games.

THE END

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